

Elementary English

Creative Writing and Story Telling
for Today's Schools

PAUL WITTY, GUEST EDITOR



ORGAN OF THE

NATIONAL

COUNCIL

OF

TEACHERS

OF

ENGLISH



Adventures of a Baby Fox

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Editor's Preface

Creative Writing and Story Telling for Today's Schools

This issue of *Elementary English* is devoted primarily to creative writing and to story-telling. In the first article, prepared by the editor, creative writing is defined and illustrated. With rare understanding and insight, Lorraine Reinhardt then describes practices and includes examples of compositions and poems written in classrooms in which stimulation and incentive are given for creativity. In Mrs. Reinhardt's article, there are included some interesting compositions written after the pupils had seen a remarkable film. In another article, William Martin and the editor of this issue give additional evidence of the value of the film, *The Hunter and the Forest*, as a classroom device for eliciting creative expression. Characteristic responses of pupils from the first to the eighth grade are given. Compositions of unusual merit were written in response to this film by the pupils in an Elizabeth, New Jersey school. Irene Grubnick, principal, describes the atmosphere of this school.

Story-telling, an old art now receiving renewed emphasis, is introduced by Leland

Jacobs' inspiring prose-poem which extols, yet describes the process and the values of this art. Typical of Phyllis Fenner is her original treatment of this topic. She stresses some ways story-telling may become a teacher's generally dependable and immensely satisfying ally in presenting a wide variety of materials. Differing in his emphasis, William Martin sets forth his belief that some stories should be memorized exactly as they are written and presented in their original form as occasions arise in the classroom. He describes some steps to be taken in memorizing stories. Another contribution, a warmly appealing tribute to the art of story-telling by Charlemae Rollins, contains many practical suggestions as well as a helpful bibliography.

The editor of this issue of *Elementary English* feels sure that these articles will stimulate thinking about creative writing and story-telling. He hopes, too, that they will lead classroom teachers to use these arts more frequently and more effectively in today's classrooms.

Paul Witty
Guest Editor

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MARCH, 1957

No. 3

PAUL WITTY

Some Values of Creative Writing

The importance of creative endeavor is somewhat generally recognized at the present time as an antidote for many phases of our mechanized culture in which individual expression is often subordinated to pursuits associated with purchased recreation and entertainment *via* mass media. In fact, some educators assert that creative expression is a requisite today for desirable development, effective personal adjustment, and good mental health in children and youth.

Throughout the period 1930-1940, books appeared in which teachers described ways to promote creativity in the classroom. One of these books, *They All Want To Write*,¹ was prepared by four teachers who described practices developed to foster practical and personal

writing. One chapter in another book, *The Arts in the Classroom*,² set forth procedures successfully used to encourage creative writing in a Los Angeles elementary school which enrolled pupils of varied racial and social backgrounds. And the writing of Hughes Mearns revealed significant values in various forms of creative expression.³

Another book, edited by Nellie Appy for the National Council of Teachers of English entitled *Pupils Are People*,⁴ included a chapter prepared by the writer of this article, in which creative writing was defined as composition of any type written at any time primarily in the service of needs such as the following:



Dr. Paul Witty

Dr. Witty is Professor of Education at Northwestern University, Evanston, Illinois.

¹A. Burrows, J. Ferebee, D. Jackson, and D. Wright. *They All Want To Write*. (Revised) New York: Prentice-Hall, 1952.

Natalie Cole. *The Arts in the Classroom*. John Day, 1940.

²Hughes Mearns. *Creative Youth*. Garden City, New York: Doubleday, Doran, Page and Company, 1937.

⁴Nellie Appy (editor), *Pupils Are People*. New York: D. Appleton-Century, 1941.

- 1) the need for keeping records of experience,
- 2) the need of sharing experience, and
- 3) the need for writing as a form of release—as expression.

At this time such a comprehensive concept of creative writing was desirable since the term was sometimes used to refer to the writing of poetry or to efforts to emulate or imitate highly approved composition. According to this broader concept, emphasis was placed on the personal values and social values of writing.

This approach to creative writing was endorsed also by students of the *Science of Semantics*. For example, Wendell Johnson, in an article entitled "You Can't Write Writing,"¹ pointed to the significance of writing that was related closely to each writer's unique experience.

This comprehensive view of the nature and function of creative writing is being increasingly accepted today. For example, the following statements are found in *Language Arts for Today's Children*, published in 1954:

Motivation of growth in language should come, in school as well as outside of school, from the effective use of it in normal social situations and the recognition of the inevitable relationship between control of words and ideas and the achievement of personal and social goals. . . .

Growth in ability to communicate is also an essential part of the development of the self. The child who learns to communicate with ease and satisfaction tends to build up an outgoing personality and a friendly relationship to others; whereas the one who is retarded in his language development or finds his efforts to communicate frustrated may become timid or inhibited or may turn aggressive and strike out at the world.²

It has become clear that the effectiveness of children's writing depends in part upon the nature and extent of their ex-

perience. In an effort to foster creative writing, teachers provide or encourage abundant firsthand experience through excursions, investigations, and observation. They also encourage pupils to share their experiences through group activities of various kinds. Recognizing the significance of shared experience, they may inquire: What opportunities have the children in my classes had for presenting and discussing their written work? Does every child have an opportunity to share his writing with his classmates? Are pupils led to criticize the work of their classmates so that communication will become clear?

Approaches in Studying the Emotional Life of the Child

To be effective guides of pupils, teachers need to become acquainted with patterns of child growth and development.

In psychological studies, data have been obtained which disclose rather reliably the nature of these patterns throughout infancy and childhood. From such reports the teacher may obtain much valuable information about children, their growth, and their needs. For example, Arnold Gesell and Frances Ilg have set forth descriptions of child development at various levels from birth to ten years of age.³

Recently a number of writers have

¹Wendell Johnson, "You Can't Write Writing," *Etc.*, August, 1943.

²The Commission on the English Curriculum, *Language Arts for To-day's Children*. National Council of Teachers of English. New York: Appleton-Century-Crofts, Inc., 1954. pp. 20-21.

³Arnold Gesell and Frances L. Ilg, *Infant and Child in the Culture of Today*, New York: Harper and Brothers, 1943; *The Child from Five to Ten*, New York: Harper and Brothers, 1946; *Youth: The Years from 10-16*, 1956.

stressed the significance of "developmental tasks" in the educative process. According to Havighurst, a developmental task "arises at or about a certain period in the life of an individual successful achievement of which leads to his happiness and to success with later tasks, while failure leads to unhappiness in the individual, disapproval by society and difficulty with later tasks."¹ Increasingly, teachers are gaining an understanding of "developmental tasks" and their application. It is, however, insufficient for the teacher merely to know important facts about child growth. The effective teacher must be skilled in studying boys and girls, and in determining their needs. For each group varies greatly, and each child has unique characteristics.

A number of practical procedures have been devised which teachers are employing in an attempt to discover the interests and developmental needs of boys and girls in their classrooms. One of the most widely used of these approaches is the anecdotal method, which has been fully described by Daniel Prescott and his associates.² In its simplest form, the anecdotal method is merely a transcription or a record of behavior or conduct which the teacher believes is significant, and can be used for pupil guidance.

Some teachers are employing an "interest inventory" to ascertain and appraise each child's needs.³ In using the Northwestern University Inventory, for example, the teacher and the pupil discuss topics such as favorite leisure activities, hobbies, play preferences, movie and reading habits, familiarity of community places of interest, and modes of transportation. Items are included in this inventory to encourage the

teacher to estimate the adequacy of the child's recreational life, his background of experience, and his association with others. Provisions are made for recording and evaluating each child's responses.

A less comprehensive approach is being used by other teachers in studying children. A list is presented and the child is asked merely to check those activities in which he has participated and found "the greatest satisfaction" or "worth" during the preceding week. The list includes sports, games, and sedentary pursuits. Activities involving construction, drawing, painting, and writing are represented. Through studying each child's favorite activities, the teacher may readily identify the pupil who is becoming isolated or who may because of other tendencies require greater individual attention. Expression of interest and of need through creative writing is often helpful in alleviating problems as well as in engendering interest and in promoting more effective expression.

The Atmosphere of the Classroom

A major responsibility of the teacher

¹Robert J. Havighurst, *Developmental Tasks and Education*. Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1948. p. 6.

²*Helping Teachers Understand Children*. Prepared by the Staff of the Division on Child Development and Teacher Personnel (Daniel A. Prescott, Chairman), Washington: American Council on Education, 1945.

³Paul Witty, David Kopel, and Ann Coomer. *The Northwestern University Interest Inventory*. Evanston, Illinois: published by the authors, Psycho-Educational Clinic Northwestern University. In three forms for children of ages five to eight, eight to fourteen, and fourteen to eighteen. Cf. in this connection, Paul Witty and David Kopel, *Reading and the Educative Process*. Boston: Ginn and Co., 1939 and Paul Witty, *Reading in Modern Education*. Boston: D. C. Heath and Co., 1949.

is to develop and maintain a classroom in which security, understanding and mutual respect foster learning. The good teacher attempts to guide children's development in such a way that their emotional life will grow increasingly stable and satisfying. Outlets for strong drives and satisfactions for basic needs are found in the varied activities and creative experiences of such a classroom. Clear evidence of the value of creative expression is revealed by the following incident.

One day a teacher noticed a small much-folded piece of yellow paper on her desk. A dandelion had been placed with apparent haste in a corner of the page on which a beautiful poem was written. Any teacher might have been pleased by the poem. But in this instance there was unusual satisfaction, for the child who had written it had been withdrawn, sensitive, and indifferent; and this was her first really spontaneous expression. But it was not her last, for her teacher promptly used the poem as proof of her ability. The poem was praised by her classmates, and the incident marked the beginning of a new school life for this child—a life of security, self-confidence, and successful endeavor. As Natalie Cole states: "Just as we can dig a channel to control the direction of a stream, we can control the direction of our children's activities through praise and recognition."¹

Understanding Children Better through Their Writing

Creative writing often enables the teacher to understand children better and to sense their varied needs. A child who is insecure may reveal his attitudes in composition such as the following:²

Giraffes

If I were a giraffe I would not show myself
to the people.
I would be ashamed of myself.
When I go to the zoo all the people laugh
at the giraffes.
I wouldn't want the people to laugh at me,
I feel sorry for giraffes.

Sometimes a child's feeling of inadequacy is not only revealed, but also relieved by this type of expression:

Monkeys

A monkey is so black
At night I cannot see him
But I know a monkey can see
Such a white-headed me.

Individually revealing writing may occur in any form. The following is another type of writing in which a child discloses his need for greater security:

I always wish I was as good as everybody
else is.
My mother always tells me that they are
no better
than I am. My mother says I may think
they are
better than I am, but they are not. My
mother
said they don't come no better than me.
She said
they may be smarter, but not better.³

As stated in *Language Arts for Today's Children*:

For many children there are therapeutic values in writing. Through repro-

¹Natalie Cole. *The Arts in the Classroom*. New York: John Day and Company, 1940.

²These two poems are included in a Northwestern University Ph.D. dissertation on *Creative Writing* by E. E. Smith (1943). See also *Pupils Are People*, A Report of the Committee in Individual Differences (Nellie Appy, Chairman), *Op. cit.*; Paul Witty and Lou LaBrant, *Teaching the People's Language*. New York: Hinds, Hayden, and Eldridge, 1946.

³The Commission on the English Curriculum: *Language Arts for Today's Children*, National Council of Teachers of English, *Op. Cit.*

ducing and reflecting upon experiences which trouble them, they are better able to accept and to live with them, relieving fears and tensions as they write. . . . Free writing can help teachers understand children. It can also help children to work through some of their problems, thus gaining in confidence and appreciation of their own potentialities and the worth of their own ideas.¹

Children, encouraged to write freely, experience great joy and satisfaction in creative writing. As in the case of reading, writing of this type sometimes provides a desirable form of "escape" as well as a highly pleasant activity. And the joy in the activity itself is often associated with the acquisition of greater competency in writing. In the following composition, one senses the waxing of proficiency in writing as well as satisfaction in the activity.

At night when the moon comes out
 She shines through my window
 She makes shadows on my wall
 Her dress is the night
 The stars are her diamonds
 When she weeps
 She covers her head with her handkerchief
 Her handkerchief is a cloud.²
 A silver moonpath swiftly comes
 On to our dusky summer lake

 One lone bird soars o'er it flying
 Softly singing,
 Breaking the stillness of the night.³

At times writing appears to be done largely in the spirit of fun. But the fun of writing is more often merged with the attainment of other satisfactions:

My Baby Sister

Who is it that has her own sweet way,
 And makes me step aside without delay,
 And thinks she's boss from day to day?
 My sister!

.....
 Who gets the new things when they are bought,

Who for my feeling cares a nought,
 Who is it for I've always fought?
 My sister!

Who is it I think's just right.
 And will fight for with main and might,
 And take care of day and night?
 My sister!⁴

Techniques to Foster Creative Writing

There are several techniques teachers are using with success to promote creative writing. The writer has already suggested the importance of enriching the child's sensitivity to the world about him and to other people as one step. First-hand experience, wide reading, the use of films and film-strips may also promote effective creative writing.

Sometimes the teacher whose class contains many pupils and who has heavy demands on her time, has relatively little opportunity to lead pupils to engage in first-hand experience. But in such cases, there is the possibility today of presenting experience through films.

Upon viewing some short films made by Arne Sucksdorff that had been obtained for distribution by Encyclopaedia Britannica Films, the writer of this article concluded that these films were ideal for use in fostering creative response because of their artistic excellence and the rich background they provided for the expression of varied feelings.⁵ Hal Kopel of Encyclopaedia Britannica Films and the writer of

¹*Ibid.*

²E. E. Smith. *Op. cit.*, Upper-Primary child, Miller School.

³E. E. Smith. *Op. cit.*, Sixth-Grade child, Dewey School.

⁴E. E. Smith, *Op. cit.*, written by a child from Rock County, Wisconsin, Grade V.

⁵Paul Witty, "The Use of Films in Stimulating Creative Expression and in Identifying Talented Pupils," *Elementary English*, October, 1956.

this article developed teacher's guides for several films designed to motivate creative writing.

In another article in this issue of *Elementary English*, some compositions written by children after viewing *The Hunter in the Forest—A Story without Words* are presented. This film was used in a widespread experimental effort to elicit and study creative writing. It may be noted that the film approach provides a highly effective device for motivating creative expression. The pupils in this experiment wrote extraordinary compositions. The approach seems not only useful to foster creative writing, but it also proves valuable in attempts to identify pupils of unusual promise in the area of writing.

The Effective Teacher

Perhaps the most significant factor in leading pupils to write effectively is the teacher—his attitude and his behavior. The effective teacher seems to be one who is interested in pupils' mental health and in the development of a classroom that is conducive to creativity.¹ Pupils themselves will often cite the importance of these characteristics in teachers who have helped them most. In the following letter, a pupil describes such a teacher.

My English teacher, Mrs. C., has helped me more than any teacher I have ever had. You see, I am an Apache Indian girl and all my people speak Apache. Mrs. C. is teaching me to make my thoughts in English. This is not easy, because most of the time I think in Apache.

She helps me most too, because she understands me. Any time she sees me she says "hello" and I say "hello" to her. Then both of us will smile. When Mrs. C. smiles she has happy brown eyes, and I think of her as my mother. You see, I have no

mother. She went away with a soft green wind a long time ago.

Last year I ran away from school. We have to be punished for that. Mrs. C. was very sad about it. She said that I must tell her exactly why I did it. When I told her how the "run-away" thought had hit my brain and made such a loud noise it just bounced me right down the road she laughed and said her thoughts bounced her around at times too. But she punished me just the same, because she had to be fair.

When I have thoughts running around inside me, I write them for her. When they are nice and beautiful we make poems out of them. We did this with the thoughts I wrote about our superintendent when he died. We named the poem "In Memoriam" and it was published by the "Arizona Highways" magazine. It will be in *The Path to the Blue Skies*, a book of creative writing by Indian children. Mrs. C. is having it published. I am sending a copy of this poem to you, because it is my best poem. I didn't know I could write poems until Mrs. C. came.

Our English room is the prettiest room we have. When we go in there we know we must work. Mrs. C. thinks we should learn to work and think like all American children. She knows we are Apache Indians, but she wants us to understand we are American citizens too.

Can't you see now how Mrs. C. is helping me?

Sincerely, Lucille Victor

In Memoriam

He is gone, friend of the Apache.
He sailed away on the deep blue waters of
the wide, wide river.
The low notes of the soft green wind called
him.

¹Paul Witry, "The Mental Health of the Teacher," Chapter 13 in *Mental Health in Modern Education*, 55th Yearbook of the National Society for the Study of Education, Part II, Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1956. See also: Paul Witry, "The Teacher Who Helped Me Most," *Elementary English*, October, 1947.

The song singing of the deep blue waters
 put him to sleep.
 I saw him, this friend of the Apache, across
 the big, wide desk.
 He said to me, "Do you like school, little
 Apache girl?"
 My tongue stuck and would not say "Yes."
 He smiled at me, and I heard him go home
 with the leaves sounding as he walked.
 Now he is gone, friend of my people.
 He sailed away with a soft green wind on
 the deep blue waters of the wide, wide
 river.

Lucille Victor, age 13
 San Carlos Indian School
 San Carlos, Arizona

Concluding Statement

In this paper, some important personal
 and social values of creative writing have

been stressed. In this form of creative expression pupils are encouraged to write for the following purposes: to keep records of significant experience, to share experience, and to experience pleasure or "escape." Such writing has, as another goal—the fostering of clear communication. Through clear and more accurate communication, human relationships are often enhanced. Moreover, such writing tends to promote mental health. In this article, the writer has traced the origin and development of a modern concept of creative writing and has given examples of compositions which illustrate some values in this approach.

LORRAINE REINHARDT

Rewards of Creative Writing

Introduction

Who can sound the well-spring of bright
 joy
 Which bursts unbidden from the young
 child's throat
 In laughter or in song
 And sends his small feet skipping through
 the day
 Impatient with the staid and sober gait
 We would impose?
 Small subject to the arbitrary whim of
 giants
 Whose giant world towers far beyond his
 ken.
 What terrors mock his littleness
 When all the shadows merge in one great
 blackness
 Where the nameless and the unknown
 Wait to devour him.
 What grief is his—
 Holding the longed for blossom
 Fragrant, and perfect in his eager hands
 Only to see it die.
 Thus to the young child the ancient pain
 For the prize is marred in the winning,
 And the joy of possession dims in the fact
 of possessing.

The taste of victory, how often, how often,
 Ashes and the salt of tears.

Grief, and terror, and boundless joy,
 Love, and hope, and a hell of hate
 In the heart of a child, in the heart of a
 man.

Swelling beyond their confines, insistent,
 engulfing,

Seeking release in laughter, tears, an
 embrace,

Or the bloody brutish battering of head on
 stone.

Violence seeking a blood bath or sub-
 mission;

The soul turned in upon itself,
 Destroying itself in secret.

Shall we not then draw forth these forces
 Out of the depths of our embattled being,
 And recreate them, separate of ourselves,
 Giving them structural entity in language?
 In very truth, emotional catharsis
 Is an effective therapeutic measure
 Well calculated thus to justify as such
 Each halting exercise of the creative arts.

Mrs. Reinhardt is at Northwestern University
 in Evanston, Illinois.

For the soul of the child it has the same
sure cleansing

And more, perhaps.

For what a child creates, reveals him in
his own perspective,

And we learn what it's like

To be chin-high to a table

In a world where cause and effect are
unrelated

Save through the captions of demigods.

But once in a blue, blue, moon

There chances by a rare and gifted spirit

Who dips his pen in song

So true, and pure, and sweetly sonorous

That all the world must listen and rejoice.

Creation must ever be a goodly thing;

But there are those who make it near
sublime—

Building a verbal ladder to the stars

That mortals, climbing it, may stand at last

In a place of far vision—a place beyond
time,

Where all who dare, may glimpse the face
of God.

Setting the Stage

Children need something about which to write. A classroom which provides a stimulating background of experiences, and encourages the sharing of these experiences, is setting the stage for creative expression.

There are numerous ways in which a teacher may foster the creative spirit:

1. By providing an informal atmosphere where children are free to express their feelings, their ideas, their dreams, and descriptions, through the written word;
2. By providing children with time in which to write;
3. By being there, proffering help, yet holding himself in abeyance if help is neither sought nor needed;
4. By recognizing and accepting the contribution of each child as a worthy contribution, evaluating it on its own merits, ever encouraging and guiding, but never pressuring;
5. By listening to and learning from children in the group, sensitive to their ideas

and alert to situations which will promote creative writing;

6. By being enthusiastic about language expression.

In addition to "setting the stage" for creative expression by providing a relaxed atmosphere, the teacher can do many things within the framework of the classroom to stimulate an interest in writing. By utilizing his own imagination and the materials at hand, he can, with very little effort, foster the desire to express feelings and impressions through the written word. The possible areas are as numerous as the resourcefulness of the teacher:

1. Observation of nature and the seasons
2. Motivation through pictures
3. The writing of group story books
4. The preparation of scripts for radio dramatization
5. Teacher presentation of parts of stories to be completed by pupils
6. Telling tall tales
7. Writing adventure stories from actual experiences
8. Preparing a school newspaper
9. Writing a class magazine
10. Using films to enrich experience.

These and other possibilities are within the grasp of every class-room teacher.

Values of Creative Writing

Creative writing, like other arts, provides the teacher with material for better understanding of the individual. But more than that, and perhaps of greater importance, creative writing can provide a release for pent up emotions. It is an integral part of our system of communication. To be able to transmit our thoughts, our desires, our interpretations to others, is an art worthy of serious consideration.

Then too, when writing becomes a joyous shared experience, it is usually accompanied by a realization of the need for

clear handwriting, accurate spelling, and correct punctuation. Thus creative writing becomes a means to improving basic skills.

Curtain Time

From the following illustrations, the reader can see the results of some creative writing stimulated by the Encyclopedia Britannica film, *Hunter in the Forest*. In each contribution the child gave something of himself. He showed himself to be a "see-er." He demonstrated the ability to use the power of his senses. One is made aware of the sounds and the smells of the forest as transmitted through his words. The rhythm, the directness, and the simplicity of expression as revealed by these word pictures are evidence of abilities which can be stimulated and nurtured by the class-room teacher.

The Hunter

One morning the hunter was going on a hunting hike. He can shoot many animals in the forest. He aimed at a deer. But he put his rifle down because the mother had a new baby deer.

Howie
Grade 2

* * * * *

The part I remember is when he shot the bird and put a feather from it in his hat. Another part I remember is when he saw deer and he was about to shoot when he saw a baby deer and he did not shoot. He probably thought the deer did not have enough meat on it.

Ricky
Grade 3

The Hunter

One bright sunny day a hunter went into the woods. The minute (or should I say second?) he went into the woods the birds flew deer ran and every other animal hid. The forest was still. Two birds unalerted to the danger were the chosen prey. BANG! went the shot. The forest was still. One bird flew. The other stayed. A feather of victory in his hat and the bird in his

hand the hunter left. Months passed. The deer had their young, flowers were blooming and the hunter was back. He found a place to camp. While he was pitching his tent he saw two deer with their young. Ah ha! he thought. Now's my chance. He brought up his gun. He cocked the trigger, sighted his prey and then! He put it down. He watched the deer. Then he left. On the way home he took off his hat took out the feather and put in a flower.

Helene H.
Grade 4

* * * * *

The Hunter

The hunter starts out. He walks among the wild flowers of the forest. It is a beautiful day the birds are singing. The deer hears the hunter and go bounding off into the forest. A squirrel runs and hides in its nest. The hunter doesn't hear a thing, but wait! He hears something now, it's a bird. He grabs his rifle he aims and then fires. It's a direct hit. He runs over picks up the bird and plucks a feather out and sticks it in his hat. Now he goes home. The clouds rumble and down comes the rain. It beats against the tender petals of the wild flowers, but the rain doesn't damage the petals. After the rain is over the hunter once again sets out. He walks among the beautiful wild flowers. He walks over to a tree and starts taking his nets down from yesterday, but all of a sudden he hears something. He takes a few steps and then reaches for his gun. He looks carefully. He picks up his gun and aims. He cocks the gun and prepares himself. He puts his finger on the trigger. He takes better aim and is about to shoot when he finds that he was about to kill a mother deer and her baby. He lets go of the trigger. He smiles and picks up his net and puts his gun over his shoulder. He picked a flower and took the feather out of his hat and put the flower in its place.

Jack S.
Grade 5

* * * * *

One morning a hunter, with a gun, was walking through the woods. He smelled the fresh pine and oak trees. Then he remembered that he was hunting fowl. He walked in and out of the trees. All at once

he stopped. There, fifty yards from him, he saw some fowl. He looked around and saw a fat one. He raised his gun, took aim and fired. One flopped over and the rest flew away. He plucked a feather, put it in his hat and walked away. As he was going home, he broke a branch of a tree.

The next day as he was looking in his trap to see if he had caught anything, he saw what he thought was one deer. As he took aim he saw that there was a mother and a father deer with their baby fawn. He lowered his gun and walked away. As he did he threw away the feather he had plucked.

The deer ate the branch that he had broken, and all was well for night was coming the animals had to get home.

Jim J.
Grade 6

Encore

A class magazine provides opportunities for a variety of writing, as demonstrated by the following examples. Since children bring to the classroom varying backgrounds of experience, centers of interest within the room coupled with a project which necessitates group co-operation, can help to provide for individual differences while stimulating expression.

I Wonder

I wonder why the clouds roll by
Why don't they stay still in the sky?
I wonder why the sky's so blue
I wonder, wonder, don't you too?
I wonder why the birds can fly
With golden wings up in the sky.
I wonder why a river flows
I wonder where o where it goes.
I wonder 'bout a lot of things
Why rivers flow and why birds sing—
I wonder.?

Laurel C.
Grade 4

* * * * *

Spring

Spring has flowers
Warm sunshine too.
Windy days for flying kites up high.
It has brooks and streams, and lakes,
And sometimes even oceans.

Ice skating times are over
And now comes time for roller skating.
The warm weather comes.

Horses frolic,
Children scream and play.
Sweet smells of spring
Sweet sounds of spring.
It is so wonderful!

Ruth W.
Grade 4

* * * * *

Anton and Trini A Boy and Girl From Switzerland

Anton and Trini are a brother and sister. They live in Switzerland. They have a mother and a father who they call Mutterli and Fatterli. They live in a neat little house made of wood and rocks. It is called a chalet. Every summer their older brother Johannli and the men and the boys of the village take the cows up into the Alps. They always have a cow parade. This year Anton is old enough to go too. Trini wanted to go but Mutterli said she needed her with the men of the house away. The Swiss people have many waterfalls and that is where they get the power to have electricity.

The next day all of the Rami family was up early. After breakfast their dog, Fatterli, Johannli, and Anton, went out to take the cows out of their hut to put bells and flowers on them, while Mutterli and Trini cleared off the table. Soon Mutterli and Trini heard bells and singing. They went outside. Fatterli, Anton, and Johannli were third in line. About one or two months later a man came down with the village people's cheese.

Switzerland is a very interesting country.

Sharon L.
Grade 4

Pam's Pie

One day Pam said, "Mother, I want to bake a pie".

Alright, but I thought you had invited your girl friend over today?"

"Can we make a cherry pie together?"

"You mean may we make a pie together."

"Well, whatever it is, can we?"

"I guess so. But help me with the dishes".

At last all the dishes were washed and dried. "I'll go and call Terrie". (Terrie was her girl friend).

When lunch was over, Pam said, "let's get started".

"Yes let's," cried Terrie.

Finally after they got the pie in the oven (with some mistakes) Pam said, "I hope it will be very good".

"I hope so."

Thirty minutes later Pam said, "let's see if it is done".

"Alright". It was done.

"May we have a piece of it now?"

"Yes". When Pam tasted the pie she said, "We made a big mistake. We left out the cherries."

Liz T.
Grade 4

Summary

If one agrees that creative expression is an art of communication which should be fostered, and that the results of stimulating such expression have therapeutic as well as social values, he will strive to create a climate within the classroom which will make children want to write; he will take time to enjoy the things around him; he will teach himself and his children to be see-ers; he will enjoy the sharing of experiences, the sounds of words, and picturesque expressions; he will read and enjoy stories and poetry; he will encourage writing as a pleasurable experience—a challenge, not a chore.

Children's writing was that of children in the College Hill School, Evanston, Illinois.

IRENE M. GRUBNICK

Creative Expression in the Halloran School¹

The children attending the Halloran School number about 375. Their parents are employed mainly in the skilled trades. A small number of the parents own neighborhood shops, while a few earn their livelihood as white collar workers.

The school itself is six years old. It is situated in an industrial area and helps to serve the needs of a nearby housing development. The school vicinity includes a radar field housing a small encampment of soldiers.

The Halloran School is the newest in the city. There are 14 full time staff members and the grade level range is from the kindergarten through the sixth. Dr. J. Harry Adams, Superintendent of Schools, designed the building so that each classroom is a self contained unit. The Hal-

loran School includes an exceptionally serviceable suite of rooms equipped to meet the needs of a group of physically handicapped youngsters. The building and the general equipment are such as to make the children, teachers, and parents feel justly proud of their school.

The folk who contribute to life at Halloran have helped to establish a fine rapport in all activities associated with the school. The teachers, the custodians and the parents cooperate for the welfare of the boys and girls. A high staff morale and

¹The editor of this issue of *Elementary English* requested that Mrs. Grubnick and her teachers write a description of the Halloran School, Elizabeth, N. J. This school submitted a remarkably large number of outstanding poems and compositions after the pupils had seen the film, *The Hunter and the Forest*.

good community relations tend to enhance the activities within the school as well as to have a salutary influence upon learning. An understanding of the objectives of the school and an opportunity to participate in formulating and changing them have led the parents to be sympathetic and helpful in facing and solving problems as they arise.

From time to time, representatives from student, staff, and parent groups meet to study, evaluate, and plan improvement in the total school program. As a group we identify our common problems and as a group we try to find solutions for them. In so doing everyone concerned with the school knows what is going on, acquires an understanding of the school's purposes, and becomes willing to assume some responsibility for the results of the program. The principal, in addition to being a group leader, tries earnestly to be a worthy group member. Leadership among staff members is encouraged too.

The curriculum is considered experimental in nature. We recognize there are no "pat answers" to problems affecting human growth and development. Hence, mistakes which are anticipated do not cause frustrations and fears. Instead, they offer a reason for seeking improvement. All of us strive to find better ways of doing our jobs.

Currently we are experimenting with a two grade arrangement for teaching reading and arithmetic. Each two-grade-group, such as the fifth and sixth, is subdivided into small sections for reading and arithmetic. Membership in a small section is based upon the results of tests, and study of each child.

The experiences offered in the small sectional groups are closely related to the

interests and needs of the students. And the skills are taught in accordance with each pupil's attainment and maturity. When a child on one maturity level reaches the standards of the next higher section, he is transferred to that group, regardless of the time of the year. Some children move ahead as frequently as 3 or 4 times a year. The flexibility of this arrangement appears not only to improve the effectiveness of instruction in reading and arithmetic, but it tends also to foster better human relations throughout the entire school.

Another device that has helped to make grade level barriers less rigid is the Friday afternoon "Happy Hour." Each Friday afternoon four classes of first and second graders get together in the auditorium for a song, play and dance period. The children sit on the floor around the piano. A teacher may play the piano, another teacher or a pupil may direct the singing, marching, and dancing. This activity includes informal sharing of experiences in music, poetry, dancing and rhythm.

One day the children were asked why they were so enthusiastic about the "Happy Hour." A few samples of their answers express their appreciation:

1. We listen to stories and songs we like,
2. We make up our own poems and stories and tell them to our friends,
3. We sing songs that make us laugh,
4. We sing serious songs, too
5. We sing songs about God, about being good and about long ago.
6. We play instruments we make; and we march and sing,
7. It's like the "Let's Pretend Program" on television,
8. We are all happy together.

We have found that art education offers many helpful experiences which con-

tribute positively to all other areas in our school program. When a new problem for study is being considered in a classroom, the special art education teacher may join the children and the classroom teacher during the planning stage. Together, the art teacher, the students, and the classroom teacher plan the pattern of the learning unit; they suggest the activities to be included and the resources and resource persons to be used. Evaluation of the unit in terms of subject matter, skills and character growth is also a cooperative effort.

We try to offer the student as much freedom as possible in moving from the academic classroom to and from the art education center. In addition to the regularly scheduled classes, small independent groups of students from different grade levels often are seen working independently in the art room. We find that our art education program has changed the behavior pattern of many students and has led to higher levels of conduct, and has served to advance their social maturity.

At Halloran we believe that the areas which give children the greatest opportunities for creative expression provide the basis for the most worth-while and far-reaching growth. Learning which stems from creative experience lends meaning to a child's endeavor. We believe that all children are endowed with the ability for creative expression. We are finding that creative expression awakens the child to a world of color, form, harmony and beauty. Our teachers recognize that all things have their own integrity and as such are valued and enjoyed by the person who creates them be he a small child or a mature adult. But we judge the worth of creative work in terms of each child himself, his needs and

his goals. We believe in the Halloran School that only those experiences which grow out of true creative efforts have the power to touch the well-springs of maximum human endeavor.

The following quotations are displayed on large mobiles throughout the building. The mobiles were made by the pupils and the combined quotes reflect the philosophy of the school.

1. Good schools are your investment in a better community.
2. A good education is for all the children of all the people.
3. My teacher is a helper.
My teacher is a guide.
My teacher is a friend.
4. Good schools build universal brotherhood.
5. Good schools encourage creative work.
6. Good schools teach a love for God.
7. Good schools preserve our democratic way of life.
8. Good schools search for a way to peace for all mankind.
9. The home, the school and the church build faith in mankind.
10. Good schools face the newness and change of modern times.
11. Good schools teach the child to plan, to work and play, to worship God in his own way.
12. Good schools make happy children.
13. A good school is one that fills small hearts, with a love for poetry and the arts.
14. Good schools have doors that open wide, To share the friendliness inside.

Creative writing, like other forms of creative expression, has flourished in the atmosphere of the Halloran School. The children write extensively and have found satisfaction in sharing and criticizing various kinds of written expression. Writing is encouraged in accord with differences in needs and interests. Some of the writing is the result of individual experience. At other times, this form of creative expres-

sion is an outgrowth of group experience; for example, the writing that followed the viewing of the film, *The Hunter and the Forest*. But this experience in writing, like

other activities in this school, is designed to develop skills and to foster the growth of each child as well as to afford him pleasure and satisfaction in his own attainment.

LELAND B. JACOBS

Story Telling, The Captor

See the child, there—

Wrapped in attention,
So alone in the midst of others,
Engrossed,
Held spellbound,
Oblivious to immediate time and place,
Caught by words,
The words of a storyteller.

What is this captor, storytelling?

Storytelling is communication between a possessor of a tale and a listener who wants to be possessed by the tale and the telling.

It is captivation:

The captivation of well-ordered plot,
Of lively characters,
Repetitive refrains,
Conversation,
Unfamiliar names,
Action and reaction;
The captivation of suspense,
Sympathy,
Laughter,
Of promise and fulfillment,
Disequilibrium and equilibrium,
Problem and solution,
Life's powerful forces at work.

It is relaxation:

Freedom from the immediate pressures of living,
Escape from the mundane,
Release from boredom,
Travail, tension;
The giving over of the jurisdiction of one's mind and heart
To impelling movement and sound,
To the enthrallment of word witchcraft;
The opening of the windows of being
To the fresh air of story art.

It is refreshment:

Feelings to savor,
Actions to view,
Thoughts to ponder,
Voices to hear,
Memories to cherish;

And enrichment:

New places to visit,
New people to know,
New stars to behold,
New hopes, new meanings,
New thresholds to cross.

It is involvement:

The tingle of fast-racing blood,
The tautness of nerve fibers,
The quickened beat of the heart,
The rhythmic movement in hands and feet,
The tilt of the head,
Goose pimples,
Eyes bright with wonder and delight,
Misty with sadness,
Mouth curled up at the corners,
Wide open in unrestrained mirth,
Fingers curling a lock of hair,
Thumb pressed against the lips,
Head nodding approval, or, perhaps,
Emphatically saying "no,"
Voice joining in refrain—
"Who goes trip-trap, trip-trap over my bridge,"
"Hundreds of cats, thousands of cats,"
"Acres and acres and acres of carrots,"
"Turn again, Whittington,
Thrice Lord Mayor of London."

It is kinship:

Kinship with Pooh,
Babar, Peter Churchmouse,
Mole, Toad, and Rat,

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Georgie of Rabbit Hill,
Horton, Bambi, the Elephant's Child,
Misty of Chincoteague,
The Yearling;
Kinship with Twig,
The Saturdays, the Moffats,
Homer Price, Pippi Longstocking,
Henry Huggins, Mary Poppins,
And Janie Larkins with Blue Willow
treasure;

With Sleeping Beauty,
Rumpelstiltskin,
The Wizard of Oz,
The Blue-Nosed Witch,
Pinocchio;
With Joseph and his coat of many colors,
And Esther, and Ruth,
And the Babe of Bethlehem;
Kinship with Pecos Bill
Old Stormalong, Joe Magarac,
Anansi, William Tell,
And Ole Paul, the Mighty Logger;
Kinship with folks of other times—
Jo and Laurie,
Johnny Tremain,
Mary and Laura in the Little House in the
Big Woods,
Huck Finn, Johnny Texas,
Caddie Woodlawn;
And other places—
Mei Li, Little Pear,
Kintu, Kanana, Kit and Kat.
Hans Brinker,
Long John Silver,
Shadrach,
And the Five Chinese Brothers.

And storytelling is more!

It is the electric circuit of the familiar:

The highlighting of everyday adventure
At home, at school, in the neighborhood,
With father and mother, brothers and
sisters,
Friends, other children, other adults,
Like bakers, and policemen, and gypsies,
and preachers;
With pets—dogs, cats, horses,
Rabbits, and even bears and skunks;
The enlightenment of work-a-day experi-
ence,
The work and play, the light and shadow,
The tangibles of daily doings,
Bicycles and roller skates,
Dolls and precious toys,

Birthday cake, new shoes, and homes to
take for granted,
The rainy day,
The bed-time ritual,
The church service,
The school play, and the picnic in the park;

The illumination of special times and
happenings:

Birthdays and holidays,
The first day of school,
Unexpected guests,
New friends, new pets, new babies,
Secrets,
The day at the fair,
At the beach, in the deep piney woods,
A visit to the grandparent's,
A boat on the river,
A baseball game, a race, a contest won,
The lost, found,
The unpredictable, ordered,
The mystery solved,
The trial and tribulation past,
The sun of everyday, bright and sure and
steadfast.

It is a bridge to the unfamiliar:

A passage to other places,
The great, grey, green, greasy Limpopo
River,
Fog magic in Nova Scotia,
Shantytown, with a tree for Peter,
The Dakota prairies, blizzard-blown,
A holiday celebration on Olivero Street,
A cabin in the mountains of Tennessee,
Wonderland,
The Golden Basket,
Mr. McGregor's Garden,
Pancakes in Paris,
And Sherwood Forest.

An arch to interesting people:

Heidi at Grandmother's,
Orville and Wilbur Wright at Kitty Hawk,
Crusoe and his man, Friday,
Pocahontas, Squanto, Sitting Bull,
Tante Odette,
Hetty and Hank, going "down, down the
mountain,"
Shawneen, Angelo, Papa Small,
Mr. Popper, Dr. Doolittle, the Peterkins,
Henner's Lydia, Araminta, Chi-Wee,
George Washington Carver,
The Hojda, Miss Pickerell, The "Good
Master,"

"And now, Miguel";
 A span to other times:
 A boy and a matchlock gun,
 A boy with copper-toed boots,
 Snow treasure in Norway,
 Hidden treasure in Glaston,
 Master Simon's well-kept garden,
 Joel, Bob, and "the pulling bee,"
 Abe who, to some folks, was "suthin'
 peculiarsome,"

Amos, mouse mentor to Ben Franklin,
 David and Goliath,
 Polly Patchwork, Little Owl Indian,
 Minstrel Adam in abbey, inn, and manor
 house;

Tales of Nile or Nantucket,
 Mediaeval castle or Indian camp,
 Roman mystery,
 Tales of rivers, prairies, and the rolling sea,
 Tales of days long gone and deeds long
 done,

And once-familiar ways.

It is a gallery of memorable pictures:

Jim Hawkins in the apple barrel,
 Ping on his Chinese houseboat,
 Little Toot busy on the river,
 Mary, Colin, and Dikon in the secret
 garden,
 The Little Red Lighthouse and the Great
 Gray Bridge,

Brer Rabbit, Brer Fox, and "dat brier
 patch,"

The Emperor, the child, and the crafty
 weavers,

Wanda Petronski's hundred dresses,
 Bartholomew Cubbins' five hundred hats,
 The Little House engulfed by the city,
 Curious George on a bicycle,
 And the night before Christmas.

This is the captor, storytelling.

See the child there—

Absorbed, entranced,
 Engulfed.

Ask him if it is not so.

But wait until the last story word is
 spoken,

Until, of his own volition, he breaks the
 spell,

Puts the period, says to himself, "The End."

Let him land and take off his wings.

He's been away a little while,

A voluntary captive of one

Who is a weaver with words.

Storytelling is a bond, an invisible
 agreement, a transaction of great worth
 between a weaver with words and one who
 treasures the weaving.

March Kite

With a twist and a twirl the March winds whirl

My prancing kite in a dancing swirl,

Tug-tug-tugging with accents gruff,

Lug-lug-lugging in gusty huff,

As it leaps and sweeps,

As it dips and flips,

Like a bouncing boat when waters curl.

Norman Stageberg

Why Tell Stories?

*"I swear by the hair on my chinny chin chin
I'll buff and I'll puff and I'll blow your
house in."*

I sat spellbound as my mother, sewing throughout the telling, put humor, drama, and vitality into each story. How the delicious creeps went up and down my spine as she said "Fe Fi Fo Fum, I smell the blood of an Englishman." *The Little Red Hen* was my favorite, the version in which the fox made the little hen so dizzy that she fell off her roost. I cannot remember that my mother ever read to me. Her stories, mostly from Grimm, I suspect, were in her head. But she loved to tell them. And so I grew up with a love of storytelling.

If I could choose one thing I would like to excell in it would be storytelling. It is a most satisfying experience, since it gives pleasure to the teller and the listener alike. If you have an inferiority complex, tell stories. The response of your listeners will build you up. We all like to be appreciated. If you are facing a dull day, tell a story. Years ago I used to spend one day each week telling stories in one of our schools. In a librarian's busy life, this might have been a burden—to arrange the time, to learn a new story each week, to hasten to get started and to arrive a bit out of breath and even low in spirits if it were a rainy day. But once I entered the school and the word went around "the story teacher is here," my spirits shot up to the skies and all was well with my soul.

Story-telling is the oldest of the arts. It goes back to times when people sat

around fires for warmth and light. There were no books to read. People far from home told repeated stories to keep alive their memories and their language. Some countries developed professional storytellers. It must have been thrilling, in those early days in Ireland to have the story teller come to your door at evening to earn his bed and breakfast by telling tales for the whole family as they sat around the fire. In India, I am told, each village had a story-teller and on hot nights, the people pulled their mats into the streets and listened to stories until a cool breeze came up and they could sleep. Those times are gone and in our country story-telling is just becoming a part of our lives. There should be more story-tellers in our schools, libraries, and homes. There is something about watching the faces of the listeners as a tale is told that makes telling more satisfying than reading the story. For one thing, the audience is included in the story.

There is no doubt about it, story-telling is hard work. It is physically wearying if you give yourself to it, but the rewards are great. Try it and see if this is not true. The sighs of happiness from children, the expressions of delight from grownups, your own pleasure on completing a well rounded tale, will inspire you to go on to bigger and better story-telling. We can't all be great story-tellers, for like all other arts, story-telling at its best requires talent. But most of us can be good tellers of tales if we but try.

Miss Fenner is the author of "Our Library" and many books for children.

Why should we tell stories? Many reasons can be given, but the main reason, it seems to me, is for the pure joy of it, for entertainment and pleasure. It is true that stories can be fitted into school programs and they can point to morals, but the real reason should be for fun. There are very definite benefits the story-teller himself gets from the experience. Telling stories enables the teller to think on his feet, so to speak; to lose self-consciousness and to gain poise.

When should stories be told? There is no particular time of day, or day of week, for story-telling. Story-telling may take place at any time. Perhaps your class needs a "change of air." Maybe a group of children needs to be amused. A teacher I knew started each day with a story. It did wonders for a class that found it hard to settle down. There were no late comers to her class. Libraries, too, find that story-telling is a drawing card. It brings children to the library, and a library habit once established leads to more than listening. Story-telling may introduce children to good literature since children usually want to read stories they have heard. I was very much impressed on one occasion when some first grade children who had to change their class room voted to choose a room near the library. Not one of them could read then, but they loved the story hour. Of course holiday times are "naturals" for story-telling. Halloween stories are much more "scarey" when told than when read. Christmas stories told to an eager group are long remembered.

Just as there is no set time for story-telling there is no set place. The place can be wherever there is a listener. Ideally a story-teller should meet a small group, and

that group should be in a circle so that the teller can look at each child. Each child then has the feeling that the story is being told just for him. As an indication of their interest, witness their responses as they come to a question in the story "And do you think that little engine wanted all those children to go without their Christmas toys?" Solemnly they answer "No." Once I was telling Howard Pyle's "Clever Peter and the Two Bottles." It began "Yes, Peter was clever. His mother said so." A little boy interrupted, "My grandmother says I'm a genius."

It is much easier to tell stories to a small group of children of about the same age. Classes can, of course, be divided for story-telling. If there is a great age range a story should be selected for the older ones in the group. A "baby" story would bore the older ones unless it is made quite clear that it is for the younger group. At times, the older pupils may enjoy a story chosen for the younger ones. The older children may thoroughly enjoy a simple story they remember having heard before. Thus, they become "superior" but interested listeners. And it should be remembered that little children can "take" far more than we realize. They often enjoy the stories chosen for older pupils.

What stories shall we tell? We all have our favorites. A beginner may find the old folk tales easiest to tell. They have a definite pattern which makes them easier to learn. They have a simple plot, a good beginning and a good ending. They are dramatic. They are loved or they wouldn't be alive today. They have "color." Some of the new picture books also contain stories that are good for telling. In some cases, the pictures must be shown too; this makes the

telling difficult because of interruptions. When a book has a story that is good for telling, we often say it has folk tale quality, as with "Millions of Cats." Then the pictures do not need to be shown as the story is told. Tell the story and let the children take the book to examine for themselves.

It is important to like the story we are going to tell for how can we expect others to like what we don't like ourselves? Each of us has certain types of stories that we either don't like or just can't tell. We should never try to use them. Let others tell Anderson if you can't. Don't try pure nonsense if you don't enjoy it. Never try dialect if you can't enjoy it.

How does one set about learning a story? This is as individual as telling it. To memorize a story word for word usually is very difficult. The telling too may be artificial or mechanical, or unnatural. If the teller learns a story word by word, he may have to "unlearn" enough of it to be natural. With an old folk tale there is much freedom because every version is a story teller's own telling. As for myself, I read a story first to see if I like it. If I like it, I read and reread it getting the story plot and characters in mind. I put aside my book and see if I remember the story. I try telling it to myself. Until you have really faced an audience you may not be sure you know it. There may be a moment of terror

as you begin. But your panic will subside as you look at the intent faces around you. At the end, when the children sigh with happiness, and expressions "neat," "rugged," "mel-LOW" come forth, you know it was worth all the effort.

Learn a new story every few weeks or months. Soon you'll have quite a repertoire.

There are many by-products from story-telling. Story-telling clubs in the classroom, in which an hour a week is given to story-telling, yield great rewards. And searching for stories to tell provides an incentive for reading. Children too become very skillful at telling stories. "Playing" stories is another valuable experience. It is true a story can be read to a group and they can dramatize it. But when a story is told the drama in it is more readily appreciated. Even older children like to "play stories." "Story playing" clubs are lots of fun too, for all can take part without the drudgery of memorizing parts,—the readers and non-readers alike.

Read Ruth Sawyer's *The Art of the Story Teller*. It is as inspiring a book as I know and at the same time practical. Do not be discouraged by its high standards. We cannot all be the great artist she is. But we can be good story-tellers and so bring much joy to others.

PAUL WITTY
AND
WILLIAM MARTIN

An Analysis Of Children's Compositions Written In Response To A Film

In this journal, one of the writers discussed some potentialities in the use of films to promote creative expression.¹ He stressed, too, the value of this approach as a method of identifying gifted pupils. And he presented a few of the compositions as examples of unusual expression. It was hoped that wide use of films in the typical classroom would result in a more general identification and encouragement of children whose promise of creativity in writing is great.

In this paper the writers will report other data obtained in the foregoing experiment.

The symbolic and imaginative film, *The Hunter in the Forest*, by the distinguished Swedish cameraman, Arne Sucksdorff² was shown in 79 classrooms in 40 schools located in 34 cities. All elementary grades were represented. The 8-minute motion picture has no narration or dialogue; it does include a musical score with sound effects to accompany the appearance of birds and animals.

At the beginning of the picture the subtitle "A Story without Words" provides a suitable introduction to the children, for they are later invited to write their own stories about the film. A film guide, developed for teachers by Hal Kopel of Encyclopaedia Britannica Films and Paul Witty, suggests related language experiences and includes a description of steps to be followed in obtaining genuine expres-

sion from the children.

For the purposes of this study, over 2000 pupils were shown the film. Their compositions were judged according to the degree to which they revealed: (a) an expression of genuine feeling; (b) sensitivity to the value of particular words, phrases, and larger units in expressing feeling; (c) response to the film maker's intent and to the materials and symbols presented; and (d) correct and appropriate use of English.

Study of the compositions suggested that about 60 per cent wrote effective prose or poetry. Two hundred and three of the total number of compositions were judged to be outstanding and to suggest potential ability on the part of the writers. Another 189 were considered examples of good or somewhat superior writing. Only 320 of the total number of more than 2000 compositions were thought to be poor in quality. Some of the most outstanding compositions have already been presented

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¹Witty, Paul. "The Use of Films in Stimulating Creative Expression and in Identifying Talented Pupils." *Elementary English* (October 1956).

²This film was prepared for school use by the Encyclopaedia Britannica Film Company, Wilmette, Illinois. It is fully described in the article by Paul Witty in footnote 1.

in the article mentioned earlier. This high frequency of superior writing may be attributable in part to the natural tendency of schools to submit compositions written by highly interested and capable pupils.

Characteristics of the Writing in Various Grades

The compositions were separated according to the grade levels of the children to ascertain characteristic differences in the writing from grades 1 to 6.

Many first grade children gave egocentric responses, beginning their compositions with expressions such as: I-saw, I-liked, and I didn't-like. The following is a representative comment:

I didn't like the man because he went into the forest to kill animals and I like animals.¹

A second characteristic of the writing of the first grade children was the tendency to label objects. One pupil wrote:

I liked the picture.
I saw a deer and a baby deer.²

Some first grade pupils were inclined to use the element of surprise as in the following:

The deer is crossing over the water.
Do you know why?
Is the hunter going to shoot him?³

A few children answered their questions and gave reasons for their observations. For example,

One day this man saw some deer.
He cocked the gun for he was going to shoot but he didn't
because of the baby deer.⁴

The tendency to respond to the music was shown by some first graders whose stories were recorded by the teachers.

I liked the music. It made me think more about the picture. Sometimes the music was the sounds of the woods.⁵

Comments at the second grade level

continued to be egocentric in nature, although this tendency was less frequent than in the first grade. The posing of questions continued, but the answers were longer and more detailed. And the children mentioned the appeal of the music somewhat more frequently.

Following is an example of an egocentric response at the second grade level.

I like the fawn and it is cute.
I like the mother deer and she is cute.
All the trees were pretty.
I liked the flowers and they are cute.
I like the fox and it is good.
I like the forest.⁶

Second grade pupils who used the question form in their writing tended to be more sensitive to the details of the picture. For example:

I wonder why that
red fox
who lived in a tree
was sticking his head
out like that.⁷

The third grade pupils frequently wrote stories which had greater paragraph or story unity and coherence. This was only one evidence of the advanced maturity of these children. Noticeable was the fact that egocentric comments were less often used than in the writing of the lower grade pupils.

There was a man looking for deer.
He saw a mother deer
and a baby deer and a father deer.
He was going to shoot the father deer
but he couldn't do it.⁸

¹First Grade, Glenbrook School, Euclid, Ohio.

²First Grade, Shore School, Euclid, Ohio.

³First Grade, Shore School, Euclid, Ohio.

⁴First Grade, Shore School, Euclid, Ohio.

⁵First Grade, Clay School, Clayton, Missouri.

⁶Second Grade, Russellville School, Portland, Oregon.

⁷Second Grade, Russellville School, Portland, Oregon.

⁸Second Grade, Oxford, Pennsylvania.

The tendency to use almost a monologue form of writing persisted, but the descriptions were more comprehensive.

What I Remember

I saw a man. And he was going to kill some deer. I saw some birds, too. The man had a gun. He was going to kill some deer but he decided not to. He was in a forest. A racoon was in a tree and hid away from the man. All the animals were afraid. The man put a feather in his hat. Then he saw some flowers, and he threw the feather away and put some flowers in his hat. There were a lot of trees.¹

Third grade pupils showed greater objectivity in their writing and tended to describe more frequently than the younger children their own emotional responses, as is illustrated by the following comment:

I liked the picture very much. But when I saw the man start to shoot the father deer, I sat in my seat with my finger in my mouth.²

Recognition of their emotional responses and greater control over language may have prompted a larger number of third grade pupils to write poetry:

Once there was a bird
I called him little sir
He flew high in the air
His wings went with a whir.³

Some of the writing of the third grade pupils showed their pleasure in experimenting with sounds and rhythm. For example:

Animals animals animals
Cannibals cannibals cannibals
The man killed a turkey
And his hand was so jerky
P.S. . . . I mean that his hand was shaky.⁴

Greater freedom and spontaneity characterized the writing of these third grade pupils. Frequent use of expressions such as the following reflected these characteristics as well as the children's pleasure or joy in writing: "Crrk!," "Bing," "Boom," "Bang," "Bing-Bang," and "Zingo."

The increased use of imaginative phrases and metaphor was another characteristic of the writing at this level:

. . . When the rain fell the music sounded like a fight. When the deer ran it sounded like mischief. When the three deer were running, it sounded like a chase.⁵

In addition to a greater sensitivity to the sounds of words, third and fourth grade pupils expressed through their stories a growing recognition of a basic fundamental purpose in writing—communication. This tendency appeared in the compositions of many pupils, who like the writer of the following story entitled "Life in the Forest" may have consciously sought to communicate their thoughts with clarity:

Once there was a hunter. One day the hunter took his gun and walked toward the forest. He brushed past the flowers. Soon he stepped behind a tree and leveled his gun. He aimed for the deer who were eating grass but he did not shoot the deer. He walked on til he came to a lake. And the deer were running happily through the forest.⁶

The following story by a fourth grade pupil affords an interesting comparison in development. The reader will note that this fourth grade pupil shows considerable freedom in writing and tends to enrich his story by the inclusion of details. Moreover, the story seems to reflect the qualities of

¹Second Grade, Public School 21, Yonkers, New York.

²Third Grade, Russellville School, Portland, Oregon.

³Third Grade, Hazel Valley, Washington.

⁴Third Grade, Public School 31, Yonkers, New York.

⁵Third Grade, Public School 31, Yonkers, New York.

⁶Third Grade, Hubbel School, Des Moines, Iowa.

reader awareness and pleasure in communicating.

The Pure-Hearted Hunter

It was late in April. A young man named Jim Miles picked up his hunting rifle to go into the woods to pick out his Easter dinner. When he entered the woods, wild life scurried about at the sight of his fierce gun. He spotted a pheasant, took careful aim and fired. He walked over to it and pulled a feather from his limp body. He stuck the feather in his hat and walked on. As he was walking he saw a fisherman's net, a deer caught his eye, no it was two. He put his gun to his shoulder, took careful aim—he lowered his gun, he saw also a fawn, he couldn't shoot. He picked up the net and the pheasant and walked on with his Easter dinner over his shoulder.¹

Similarity was noted in the writing of pupils in the third and the fourth grades. The chief differences lay in the tendency of the fourth grade pupils to write somewhat longer compositions, a larger amount of poetry, and more detailed and imaginative prose. Many fourth grade pupils were somewhat more skillful in writing than pupils in the third grade as may be seen by comparing the following poem with poems written by the younger pupils.

A hunter went a hunting
He shot a lovely bird
He took a feather from its back
Then not a sound was heard.
The hunter went a hunting
He almost shot a deer
His good sense told him not to shoot
But he'd been very near.²

The fourth grade pupils frequently reacted in a highly personal way to the incidents and occasionally to the symbolism. There was a growing tendency, too, to give a personal reaction or a kind of evaluation of the film:

I think the hunter was a kind man. If he shot the deer the fawn would have died without a mother and father.

Some parts of the film were very funny. I thought the badger was very funny when he poked his head out of the hole in the tree.³

The writing was distinctly superior at the fifth and sixth grade levels. The pupils now seemed to possess the basic writing skills and the maturation to express themselves more clearly and in a more artistic way.

The compositions of the fifth grade pupils varied in length from short paragraphs to stories of five and six pages. On the whole, the pupils wrote enthusiastically. They reacted more frequently to the symbolism and tended more often than pupils in the earlier grades to interpret the film. For example:

This hunter is what I call a sport. He shot at the fowl but he did not fire at the Mother Deer. Mr. Hunter got up early with his shotgun and went into the forest. He crept along without making any noise. But the deer got his scent and took off. The birds were so busy fighting they slipped up on their protection. It was easy to kill that dumb bird. But as the hunter left he broke a branch. That was a mistake. The animals knew somebody was around. Mr. Hunter had a perfect chance to kill a deer, but he did not. A baby deer or fawn is no good without a mommy.⁴

In a previous report of this study,⁵ several compositions suggesting giftedness on the part of the pupils were presented. Another highly imaginative composition follows:⁶

¹Fourth Grade, Hubbel School, Des Moines, Iowa.

²Fourth Grade, Phalen Park Elementary School, Minnesota.

³Fourth Grade, Public School 21, Yonkers, New York.

⁴Fifth Grade, David W. Harlan School, Wilmington, Delaware.

⁵Witty, *op. cit.*

⁶Fifth Grade, Hazel Valley, Washington.

The hunter steps silently from his door
 Out into the woodland.
 The trees grow tall, the grass grows high
 On the forest floor.
 The time is spring,
 The fawns have come,
 And soon a shot will ring
 Only to make them lie silently
 On the forest floor.

Uniqueness in the expression of imagery and originality in form characterized many fifth and sixth grade compositions. The following composition illustrates this type of writing:

It was a lovely spring morning as the deer scampered across the meadow. The marten frisked about the tree tops, and the ruffled grouse argued noisily over their nesting place. No one seemed to notice the hunter creeping quietly along. A shot rang out. The grouse fell . . . dead. At once there was great silence. The marten ran to a hollow hole in a tree; the grouse lay silently in the tall grass and the deer reclined to safety of the shadows.

The hunter was preparing a new trap when something caught his eye. It was a family of deer. The hunter quickly reached for his gun. Just as he raised his gun and was going to pull the trigger he realized how helpless they were. Think of the fawn with no mother or father to provide it with food. The buck's horns sure would look fine over the fireplace at the lodge, but the life of the fawn and its family were more precious to Nature and Wildlife than a hundred buck's horns so the hunter left the forest never to disturb its peace again.¹

The writing at the fifth and sixth grade levels included a greater use of metaphor, original fresh language, and expressions of a humorous type. For example:

Crunch, crunch is the sound of a hunter as he makes his way over nature's carpet of leaves.²

Ding, dong. Five o'clock in the morning. Mrs. Mary gave Mr. Mary his knapsack and gun. Time to go hunting again.³
 Two grouse were dancing in a clear place

in the forest. All at once, "Boom!" One fell dead.⁴

The sun was out and the breezes were playing tag when the hunter headed for the woods.⁵

A hunter went out in the forest one day, He was looking around for some fun.

He didn't need food or a trophy for home, He just liked to hear

(and I heard this by ear)

The bang of his old shotgun.⁶

Fifth and sixth grade pupils occasionally made highly personal, reflective comments such as the following:

I thot the man just had a fight with his wife and then he went out in the woods with revenge in his mind. He said to himself will I give her a good scare.

So he went out and started to shoot everything in his sights. And almost killed a doe. And did kill a bird.

But then he stopped and realized what he was doing. That afternoon he went back to his wife and apologized.⁷

Several of the fifth and sixth grade pupils noted with approval that the film, *The Hunter in the Forest*, depended upon the photography to tell the story. This type of insight was not displayed by pupils in the earlier grades:

. . . If there had been sound you wouldn't get your own natural feeling because the voice would give you its feeling and you wouldn't stop to think about your feeling. If a movie like that would be used to teach arithmetic or something on that form the idea would be no good.⁸

¹Fifth Grade, Burton School, Nashville, Tennessee.

²Sixth Grade, Glen Cove Junior High School, New York.

³Sixth Grade, Lincoln Public Schools, Nebraska.

⁴Sixth Grade, Evan G. Shortlidge School, Wilmington, Delaware.

⁵Sixth Grade, Glen Cove Junior High School, New York.

⁶Sixth Grade, Glen Cove Junior High School, New York.

⁷Sixth Grade, Lake Silver School, Orlando, Florida.

⁸Sixth Grade, Charles B. Lore School, Wilmington, Delaware.

Concluding Statement

The first and second grade pupils responded rather generally in an egocentric manner to the film, *The Hunter in the Forest*. And they tended to write in a simple objective way labelling objects they had seen or feelings they had experienced. Occasionally they posed simple questions and often allowed the questions to remain unanswered.

The third grade pupils tended to continue asking questions which they answered more frequently than did the younger pupils. They wrote longer compositions with greater objectivity and with more frequent description of their own emotional reactions. Poetry was more often written than formerly and other forms of spontaneous language expression were also more frequent.

The fourth grade children composed stories and poetry similar in most respects to those of the third grade pupils. However, there appeared to be a greater freedom in writing, and a somewhat greater amount of detail was included in their compositions. They seemed a little more aware of the fact that their stories would be read and hence, they appeared a little more concerned than the younger writers about the reader. The fourth grade pupils wrote somewhat longer compositions, more poetry and a larger amount of imaginative prose, rather skillfully composed.

Greater superiority in writing skill was shown by the fifth and sixth grade pupils who responded more frequently to the symbolism and expressed more often their interpretations of the film. They used metaphor frequently, showed greater originality in the choice of words and phrases, and tended occasionally to write in

a humorous vein. There was at this level a noticeably higher incidence of writing of distinctive merit.

In this paper the writers have set forth some likenesses as well as differences in the compositions written by pupils from grades one through six. They recognize that there is overlapping from grade to grade and that these characteristics may not appear in writing stimulated by another approach to creative expression. They recognize, too, that their conclusions are highly subjective and might not be verified were the compositions to be read by other judges. However, they have included samples of the writing to illustrate the basis for each judgment.

The writers wish to emphasize again their belief that the use of a film such as *The Hunter in the Forest* is an excellent way to stimulate creative expression. The diversified sensory imagery evoked by seeing the film provides the basis for a wide range of expression. Thus, the film is suitable for use in a classroom in which marked differences in ability are found. In such a classroom, all children usually respond enthusiastically to the film, and the gifted as well as the less able pupils are motivated to write creatively. From the excellence of many compositions, one might conclude that this approach offers a promising method for identifying pupils potentially gifted in the ability to write. The possibilities inherent in this approach seem to have been realized in this experiment. For the film approach has proved unusually successful in leading children to express themselves creatively. Certainly the writing of these pupils is of an unusual excellence and is indicative of promise in many cases.

StoryTelling - Its Value and Importance

Story-telling is the oldest of all the arts. As far back as any one can remember, people told stories to each other; and as far back as memory goes, people *listened* to the stories.

Down through the centuries men have shared their experiences and feelings through the spoken word as people in each succeeding generation were told of the deeds of their forefathers. The pilgrims returning from their journeys to Jerusalem told stories heard during their travels. The French and English troubadours and minstrels, and the German Minnesingers recounted brave deeds in song and story to entertain and inform. Long before there was any written language this was the most important media of communication.

In the days before the white man came to America, story-telling was an important part of the life of the Indians. In *Tales of the Cheyennes* by Grace Penney, one of the earliest story hours is described. "All Cheyenne history and sacred beliefs were kept alive in the memories of men by being told around the campfires. Story-tellers were honored old men, wise in their lore of the people, and stories were owned by certain tellers and might not be told by any other person. The owner might give the story to another just as he might give a robe or any other gift. When the people were called together to hear the stories, they were seated around the fire. The old story-teller sat in a place of honor, the door was closed after everyone was seated and no one was allowed to leave,

get up and walk around, and no one spoke during the story. It was believed that any distraction would bring great misfortune upon the camp. The story-teller began the story by saying:

"LISTENERS ABOVE THE GROUND
LISTENERS UNDER THE GROUND
SPIRITS WHO LIVE IN THE FOUR
PARTS OF THE EARTH!"

Story-telling was a sacred ceremony and often the teller offered a prayer for help in telling of stories exactly as they were told him."¹

Primitive tribes in Africa use story-telling as the sole means of educating and training their children. The eminent folklorist, Ernest Balintuma Kalibala writes of the story-telling of the Bagandas in East Africa in *Wakaima and the Clay Man*:

"Because of social taboos, stories are not told during the daytime, although this custom is fading because of European culture. Mothers and grandmothers ordinarily tell the stories in the evenings after supper. Sometimes the children of the village gather together and tell the stories with drums and dancing, dramatizing the most interesting ones. The story-teller stands in the center, the audience is seated in a circle. Last and most important, the speaker should never stand still. He should move about while telling the stories, but should dramatize certain parts with gestures, body twists, kicking, climbing trees

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¹*Tales of the Cheyennes* by Grace Penney. Houghton-Mifflin, 1953.

and hiding behind bushes."²

The fundamentals of story-telling have varied little during the centuries. In various places, the techniques have been changed. Whether children gather in libraries to hear stories or under umbrellas in parks and playgrounds or in school-rooms, certain principles are followed.

First, story-telling is a living art which should not be confused with elocution or dramatics. It differs from reading to children or adults in that there is not the barrier of the book between the listener and the story-teller. It has been described as the "breathing of life into literature."

Primarily, its function is to entertain and give joy. Yet it has been found to be an excellent means of getting acquainted, of easing tensions between a new teacher and her pupils or any newcomer to the group. It is one of the fundamental ways of transmitting ideas. It develops imagination and deepens the child's appreciation of beauty, not only in art and literature, but in all life around him. It is the librarians' most important method of introducing good books to her readers.

For the youngest child, story-telling is a means of helping him to understand the world about him and to widen his interests. At first, he needs only a very simple story of a few short sentences about his dog, his kitty, another child, a train or a car. A simple folk tale of the repetitive type may then be introduced; for example, *The Pancake*, *Three Billy Goats Gruff*, *Wanda Gag's Millions of Cats*, or *The Old Woman and Her Pig*. At this time, the child is building a foundation for later ap-

preciation of the longer fairy tales of Grimm, Andersen, Asbjornsen and for the modern imaginative stories of Kipling, Sandburg, and Pyle.

Story-telling for older children offers an opportunity to introduce the great epics Beowulf, King Arthur, The Iliad, The Odyssey, and the lives of great heroes and heroines. The excitement of achievement in the conquests of great men and women make excellent source material for stories which appeal to older boys and girls, as well as to adults.

Holidays and festivals offer opportunities for sharing stories in PTA and other community groups. Family stories that explain folk customs and national characteristics offer excellent means for breaking down barriers associated with race and religion.

The growing importance of story-telling as a great international force was shown by The Children's Library Association at its annual Conference in Miami Beach in June, 1956. This group presented a Story-telling Festival.

In a setting of great beauty in the Fountainebleau Hotel, six of America's outstanding story-tellers and three foreign librarians held a capacity audience enthralled for three hours on three successive days!

A Japanese story-teller told a story first in English and then delighted his audience with the Japanese version; a German librarian told an old favorite, "The Wolf and the Seven Kids." Although this story was told in German it was easy for those who did not speak the language to follow the exciting happenings through the vivid presentation. A librarian from Hendon, England gave the audience a

²*Wakama and the Clay Man* by Ernest Balintuma Kalibala. Longmans, Green & Co., 1946. N. Y.

memorable experience with her delightful interpretation of Eleanor Farjeon's "Elsie Piddock Skips in Her Sleep." This visitor brought personal greetings from John Masefield, poet laureate of England, himself a lover of stories. She also read a letter from Eleanor Farjeon containing a tribute to American story-tellers.

For the person seriously interested in learning how to tell stories—the techniques and the pitfalls to be avoided—there is appended to this article a list of the most recent books and bibliographies in the field of story-telling.

Whether the reader plans to tell stories to one child at home or to several hundred in a library, a classroom or an outdoor theater, there is help and encouragement in the books and pamphlets listed.

Gudrun Thorne-Thomsen, noted Norwegian writer and story-teller in her essay *Story-telling and Stories I Tell*, gives the essence of effective story-telling:

"The techniques are simple. You have a story you like very much, and you want to tell it. We take for granted that this story is good literature, that you have chosen one well suited to the age of the children. . . . You are prepared to tell your story, then forget yourself. You are the instrument; the story is the thing."³

Bibliography

- The Art of the Story-teller* by Marie Shedlock.
Rev. ed. 1951. Dover Publishers.
The Way of the Story-teller by Ruth Sawyer,
Viking, 1942.

Story-telling Time by Elva Young Van Winkle, a pamphlet prepared for The Division of Libraries for Children and Young People of A.L.A. and now distributed by the General Federation of Women's Clubs, 1734 N Street N.W., Washington 6, D. C.

This is a useful pamphlet with up-to-date bibliography and excellent essay on how to tell stories.

Story-telling a reprint from an article by Sara Fenwick, an outstanding story-teller and Professor at the University of Chicago, prepared for The American Educator Encyclopedia, Publishers House, Lake Bluff, Illinois. (Free)

How to Tell a Story by Ruth Sawyer, reprinted from Compton's Pictured Encyclopedia, 1000 North Dearborn St. Chicago, Illinois. (Free)

Also published by Compton's:
Folk Lore—Two Articles: "American Folklore and its Old World Backgrounds" by Carl Carmer; and "Following the Folk Tales Around the World" by Mary Gould Davis. (Also Free)

Story-telling and Stories I Tell by Gudrun Thorne-Thomsen. The Viking Press has issued this booklet as a memorial to this great story-teller. (Free)

Lists of stories and poetry also lists of records for the story-teller have been prepared by Children's Librarians in the following libraries:

- The Carnegie Public Library, Pittsburgh, Pennsylvania
Enoch Pratt Free Library, Baltimore, Maryland
New York Public Library, New York

³*Story-telling and Stories I Tell* by Gudrun Thorne-Thomsen. The Viking Press, 625 Madison Ave. New York 22, N. Y. (Free)

Some Stories Should Be Memorized

It will generally be conceded that there are several ways to present a story aloud. The story can be retold and it can be partly rephrased with limited sections quoted exactly as the author has written them. On the other hand, an entire story can be memorized and then told in the author's exact words. The latter procedure is frowned upon or questioned by some persons who believe that "Memorization stifles the flow of story-telling." It is suggested that it is "better to read aloud stories that depend upon exact unyielding structure and language."

It is my purpose here to re-examine these issues. It seems to me that memorization is a desirable technique to be used as a basis for presenting some stories. However, it is only one of several procedures which may be employed effectively.

Good story-tellers have one common objective whether they memorize a story word by word before presenting it, or simply retell the story emphasizing the main items and including the necessary details. Their aim in preparation is to assimilate the story rather completely.

Some stories should perhaps not be retold from the original language. The charm, for example, of *The Highwayman* depends to a large degree upon the particular phrases and the choice words. The originality too of an author may be lost when a classic story such as *Peter Rabbit* is retold. To enjoy some stories to the maximum, audiences need to have the experience of hearing them as they were written.

Any good story that one wants to assimilate in its original form so that it may be shared whenever and wherever the occasion arises is worthy of memorization. The important thing is that the person selecting the story likes it and feels that it is suitable to be memorized by him. My high school English teacher in Hiawatha, Kansas, did not scurry for a book and thumb pages while the ideal moment for telling a poem or a story flitted away. She knew several stories and could tell them as fitting occasions arose. The story-telling mother of ages past did not require a book to tell a favorite folk tale. The traditional story-teller by the campfire was not guided by a book as he told Biblical stories in majestic cadence. All these persons knew stories and enjoyed telling them.

I am not defending meaningless memorization. Demanding that a student memorize as a disciplinary measure is as reprehensible today as it was in Mr. Creakle's classroom, but misuse of a method should not prejudice one against its values.

Memorizing is an accepted process in attaining competency in some of the arts. Both the amateur pianist and the concert pianist have to memorize compositions. Actors also must memorize passages. Ministers, lecturers, and many other workers memorize some materials for repeated use. Memorization is a tool that has wide applicability in life today.

The criticism that rote memorizing necessarily restricts communication can

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not be accepted as valid. One who falters or goes "blank" while telling a memorized story has usually not completely memorized the materials. Effective recall results from total assimilation by which a story becomes a natural part of the teller's personality. Impossible? Not at all. Many of us have absorbed complete verses of songs such as "Hail, Hail the Gang's All Here," "Auld Lange Syng," "Jack Be Nimble," and others. Few people will struggle to remember the words of their favorite songs.

Memorization serves effectively for the telling of stories not only when they are written in verse but also when they are in prose form. Some writing is so precise or so beautiful or so fitting for certain occasions that it should be presented exactly as the artist conceived it. Stories of this type should be memorized and told exactly as they were written.

When one has completely memorized a story, he has considerable freedom in delivering it. It is akin to the mental phenomenon that permits us to remember personal experiences of years past in their original detail. There is little searching for words or sequence in recounting such personal stories. To develop a similar facility for remembering a printed story, it is necessary to over-memorize until the story flows without effort, without fear of forgetting. Then the teller has freedom for emphasis that permits him to give the story his own interpretation.

The amount of time required for memorizing depends upon the length of the story and upon the attitude of the teller toward the story. Stories to be memorized should be favorites. Let me ask these questions. What poems and stories are your

favorites? Are they not stories that you can learn readily because they already are perhaps half-learned. The choice for story-telling material may begin with your favorite and long-cherished tales.

There will be many occasions for practice in memorizing. A good time for practicing may be when you are travelling alone. When I can tell a story repeatedly without error, I begin polishing, shaping, and interpreting it. May I suggest that you select a short story you want to memorize. Search your schedule for brief periods for practice. Daily drill is a requisite to building a repertoire of memorized stories.

Interpretations of any story are as varied as the personalities of the individual story-tellers. Within the framework of each story many distinctions are not only possible but desirable. Every story told thus may be permeated with the story-teller's personality. Stories sometimes change too as a natural development of frequent tellings. Subtle shifts in emphasis, in rhythm, in overtones appear. Discovery of new meanings in a story is one of the abiding pleasures of telling stories.

I shall never forget an incident which showed clearly that good story-telling results from a happy union of story and teller. It occurred during a story-telling workshop when a teacher wanted to learn and present "The Little Match-Seller," by Hans Christian Andersen. This was not one of my favorite stories. I told this to the student but she insisted on memorizing the story. Later I heard her tell a story unlike "The Little Match-Seller" of my memory, although the words were unchanged. Her story had a radiance and beauty; her telling of this story will long be remembered by me. I still consider

the story inappropriate for my telling; it is not for me, but I would travel far to hear it told again by this teacher.

The interpretation of a story involves two meanings, separate and distinct, yet interwoven. The first is connected with the author's message and the second associated with the story-teller's interpretation. When both have been explored and appreciated, their fusion creates a new expression not necessarily inherent in the original story. Thus each teller has his own unique way of presenting and interpreting a story.

I believe that there are a number of very important values in telling some stories exactly as they are written. This is true especially of stories in poetic form and of others as well. The latter are stories often of singular beauty in so far as language expression is concerned—sometimes of delicate artistry in other respects.

For years, now, I have memorized such stories. I select each story in terms of its appeal to me and because I believe it will be liked by and be appropriate for an audience I have in mind.

In the early stages of memorizing each story, I may have notes or a book at hand. Committing anything to memory is difficult. If exact expressions are to be learned, repetitions must be continued until the language and the story experience merge with the story-teller's personality—until there is complete assimilation of the materials. This requires time and much effort.

A teacher may come to enjoy preparing stories for this type of presentation. His selections should be the stories which offer him ever-renewing pleasure. If the teacher memorizes one story a year he will have at the end of five years, at least five tales that

he can tell skillfully and creatively—a solid basis on which he can build interest in reading and language. Each memorized story can be repeated many times a year, even with high school students. "Tell it again" is the satisfying compliment for a tale well told.

The committing of whole stories to memory is most appropriate for stories designed for young children. Skillfully condensed longer stories, shortened versions of favorite stories, as well as stories of appropriate length, can be employed by high school teachers.

There are, of course, many kinds of stories to be told. Innately, everyone is a story-teller. The urge to spin tales of personal experiences is universal. Man respects and cherishes his right to become the hero of his own stories. It is from this inner urge that stories originate. It is from this urge that many of us are convinced that "I should write a book about this experience." The personal experience is one form of acceptable story material, even though the listener knows the experience may at times be embroidered or extended. The person who consciously threads his stories with suspense and works up to a climax, may be designated a "natural story-teller." Many people say that good story-tellers are "born with the art." I cannot agree. All of us have basic interests in and capacity for story-telling. Practice and discipline more than any other factors account for the vibrant communication of which some story-tellers are capable.

Not only should teachers learn to tell stories effectively, but children should be encouraged to develop this ability. Regardless of the techniques used in preparing a story, the objective remains constant.

Stories are told primarily for the happiness they impart and the satisfaction desired by the teller. It is sometimes enough to tell a story for joy alone, for as Masfield has

said, "the days that make us happy make us wise."¹

¹Here endeth the section of this issue as edited by Professor Witty.

RUTH STRANG

Interest as a Dynamic Force in the Improvement of Reading

We have all observed the dynamic effect of interest on children's and adolescents' reading. A first-grade class quickly learned to recognize the words in the story they dictated to the teacher about a little white kitten who strayed into their classroom. A class of mentally retarded children who generally had a defeatist attitude toward reading, made progress in reading simplified versions of newspaper stories and articles which they themselves had selected as especially interesting. A group of older boys who had left school without learning to read, went to work in earnest after they had realized the importance of reading in getting and holding a job. They made remarks such as the following:

"I'm in a rut in my job because of my poor reading. There's no future in it and I'm afraid to take a good job that requires reading. I don't want to be a day laborer all my life. I'm 20 years old and if I don't learn to read now, I never will. It's now or never for me. I wouldn't dare to get married because I'd never feel secure in my job."

Another said:

"My boss wanted me to take a job in the office, but I knew I'd have to read letters and bills so I told him I was more valuable to him in the shipping room. He kept asking me and I kept stalling for about nine months; then he hired someone else."

An emotionally disturbed boy who at first resisted all attempts to teach him to read and refused even to open a book, read with keen enjoyment a story the teacher had written especially for him in his own idiom, expressing his own feelings of hostility and anxiety. She ingeniously wrote the story on cards, a sentence or two on each card, because she felt that the boy would immediately reject any story presented in book form.

These glimpses of the dynamic effect of interest lead us to examine in somewhat more detail the nature of interest and its influence on the process of learning to read more effectively.

The Nature of Interest

Psychologically, interest is a motivating force; it leads to action.

Interest is closely allied to the self—the physical, psychological, social, and ideal self. One's feelings, aspirations, needs, and hopes for the future are important to him. Consequently they are invested with interest. The closer the interest is to the center of the individual's concerns, the more intense it becomes. We have noted this relation in the instances just given. When interested, these persons

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identified with reading directly, or with life situations in which reading was needed. In brief, interest stems from the needs and values of the person—from what is important to him. It is a product of many facets of his personality.

Intelligence and achievement interact with these personality factors to create interest. We usually like to do the things we can do well; we get satisfaction from functioning as we are capable of functioning; we are interested in books we can read fluently; we lose interest when the reading of an initially appealing book presents so much difficulty that we feel frustrated. Other things being equal, the greater our interest, the more rapidly we learn.

Interest is also related to the meaningfulness of the material read, especially to the personal meaning that it has for the individual. Children are interested in reading notices on the bulletin board that give them information they need. They read with keen interest directions that tell them what they want to know, or how to do something they want to do.

Reading interest is not a unitary thing. Individuals may show all sorts of different interests in the content of a book—interest in the plot, the characters, the style, the philosophy. At times some children are interested in the reading process. They are almost always interested in observed improvement. Sometimes their main interest is in making use of what they read.

There are wide individual differences in interests; in fact, every person has a unique pattern of interests. Complexity of interests parallels complexity of personality. We can define a person by his interests. Individuals likewise differ in the

intensity of their interests.

Interests are not predetermined by heredity, nor are they excessively resistant to new influences. Initial interests can be modified. New interests can be built. Much depends on the opportunities for developing them.

Although many childhood and adolescent interests are transitory, there is probably for each individual a central core of interests which is persistent and pervasive. Interests, at their best, are associated with a continuing purpose rather than with a passing experience or a chance stimulation arising from some object or event. True interests are a coordinating, motivating aspect of life.

Effects of Interest on Reading

Interest evokes effort. Ever since, almost half a century ago, John Dewey clarified the concept of interest and effort, the view has been reinforced that interest and effort are not antithetical; they may even have a reciprocal relation. If a book or article has meaning, use, and purpose for the individual, he will put forth the effort that reading demands. If his effort is rewarded by obtaining information or some other desired satisfaction, his interest in reading will, in turn, be increased. The country boy, a "remedial reading problem" in school, who puzzled out the meaning of an agricultural bulletin, was motivated by the desire to find out how to raise a prize pig. However, interest cannot completely compensate for lack of reading skills. The person whose reading ability falls below a certain critical point cannot get the meaning of a passage, no matter how interesting its content may be to him.

Interest is selective; it determines

which of the many things that lie within our field of perception we will pay attention to. Interest also regulates the degree of our attention and the span of our attention. One twelve-year-old boy who was referred to a reading clinic because "he couldn't keep his mind on anything for more than three minutes," paid close attention for an hour with a worker who was warm and friendly in her manner; she interspersed the standardized diagnostic with comments and picture reading about the Big League baseball players, the youngster's dog, and other things of interest to him. In the clinic situation this boy was ready to pay attention to certain things; in the school situation, his interest was not evoked.

Interest integrates and organizes experience. It relates specific behavior to some goal that seems important to the person. Wholehearted interest in a book may have an integrating effect on the child's personality. It is a good experience for a young person to become absorbed for a time in something bigger than himself and beyond himself, to identify himself with an admirable character, to "feel with" another person, real or fictional. Interest in one book may also lead to further reading. A student selects a book because of some initial interest—a friend recommended it; he heard friends talking about the characters; the teacher read an excerpt that caught his interest; the title was appealing. A satisfying experience with this book may form the nucleus of a reading pattern; he may go on to other books on the same topic, books with similar appeals, or books by the same author. This reading may, in turn, awaken other reading interests.

Interest aids comprehension and memory. Some psychological experiments have demonstrated that interesting content is comprehended and retained better than uninteresting content. Bernstein¹ selected two stories which she made equivalent in readability as measured by the Flesch, Lorge, and Dale-Chall formulas. One story was full of action and suspense; it portrayed teen-age characters in situations of interest to teen-agers. The other selection, from a famous novel, was a long, wordy description of adult characters. The ninth-grade students who read both stories comprehended the first more quickly and more accurately. They also rated it as more interesting than the other selection. In another research, William Wharton² replaced the vague, general expressions in a college history text by more precise, picture forming words; this, too, had a favorable effect on comprehension. Similarly, improvements in the organization and interest of a high school history text clearly facilitated comprehension.³ When new material is related to the individual's past and to his expectations for the future, it is firmly anchored in his memory.

Interest facilitates learning in still another way. It creates readiness for a specific reading assignment and increases the satisfaction of the reading experience.

¹Margery R. Bernstein, "Relationship Between Interest and Reading Comprehension." Unpublished doctoral project. New York: Teachers College, Columbia University, 1953.

²William P. Wharton, "Picture-Forming Words and Readability of College History Texts." Unpublished doctoral thesis. New York: Teachers College, Columbia University, 1952.

³Eleanor M. Peterson, *Aspects of Readability in the Social Studies*. New York: Bureau of Publications, Teachers College, Columbia University, 1954.

How Young People Perceive Interest

Youngsters agree with psychologists on the efficacy of interest in learning. When asked, "What makes a book easy to read?" a large proportion of them will say, "If it's interesting."

In twelve different schools and communities about 250 youngsters from the sixth through the twelfth grades, with IQs of 82-150, were asked, "How does your interest in a book or assignment affect what you read, how you read, and what you learn?" With very few exceptions they confirmed our impression of the dynamic force of interest. They described a pattern or sequence: If the book or assignment is interesting, they read it eagerly and with enjoyment. Their interest enlists their attention and impels them to read it fast but thoroughly. Because they are concentrating harder than usual, they comprehend what they read. The whole process is satisfying. They learn and remember what they have read. This satisfying experience may lead them to read other books by the same author, look up more information on the same topic, and widen their interests. As one bright twelve-year-old boy said, "My interest in books and reading them broadens my knowledge of many things and increases my vocabulary. And the more interest, the more reading; the more reading, the more knowledge."

Children confronted with dull, drab, uninteresting reading material show the opposite pattern. They read reluctantly, their minds wander, they skip and skim so that they can "get it over with" more quickly. Consequently they do not comprehend, learn, or remember much of what they read. Since it is so lacking in satisfac-

tion, this experience does not lead to further reading and study activities.

Some direct quotations from the compositions these youngsters wrote on this subject will illuminate their feelings about interesting books and assignments.

They relate interest to effort, saying repeatedly in various ways that interest affects the effort they put forth. The following comments are typical:

"If you're not interested, you don't care whether you succeed or fail."

"If the assignment doesn't interest me, it may take me an hour when another person could do it in 20 minutes."

A thirteen-year-old girl in the ninth grade made this more comprehensive comment:

"An assignment affects what I read in this way: if it's on something that I'm interested in, I'm likely to read everything I can find on the subject. If I'm not so interested, I'll read just as much as I have to."

"How I read is affected in this way: if the subject holds my interest, I will read at my normal rate of 700 words per minute. If it doesn't hold as much of my attention, I'll slow down to about 400 a minute. Also, if I'm interested in it, I'll concentrate so deeply that it would take an atom bomb to divert my attention. If I don't like the subject so much, I'll concentrate, but not as deeply."

Interest creates readiness for reading.

A seventh-grade youngster expressed it in this way:

"If I am interested in a subject I am much more susceptible to knowledge. I will read it much better and easier. On the other hand, if I am not interested and the subject is boring I may have some sort of a mental block. This is very foolish and I am trying to correct it. We sometimes have to work on things we don't like."

The latter point of view was seldom expressed; most youngsters spoke with an air of finality about the effect of interest. Very few recognized any responsibility for

building interest in an initially uninteresting subject. However, one put it this way: "Books or assignments are interesting only if you make them so." When specifically asked, "How can you get interested in something you aren't interested in at first," a class of eighth-grade pupils offered many sound suggestions such as the following:

"First of all you have to go at it with the attitude that it can be interesting. If you start out thinking that it won't be interesting or fun, the chances are slight that you will end up liking it.

"Second, you have to remember that a subject may sound as if it wasn't going to be interesting but the more you find out about it, the more you will realize that it is really interesting. Before you say that it isn't interesting you must know about it.

"Try to find out the things that are interesting about a subject and concentrate mostly on these."

Many students firmly believe that interest underlies learning and remembering. "If you are interest in sometink," said a seventh-grade youngster with an IQ of 72, "you will learn but if you are not interest in wart you reading you will not learn." These youngsters link interest with careful reading, with learning, and with enjoyment. An able learner in the tenth grade said, "If I'm really interested in a subject and am eager to learn it, I find myself learning as fast as I can read the knowledge off the page."

A fourteen-year-old girl with an IQ of 126 emphasized her inability to remember books that she does not enjoy: "If I know I must read a particular book, I must read it whether I enjoy it or not, although to tell you the truth, if I don't enjoy it, it goes in one ear and out the other . . . although I've read every word." A boy in the ninth grade described his reaction to

uninteresting books more concretely: "When I read a book that isn't interesting, I become very bored and start dreaming or even sleeping: I begin to twiddle around with other things because I am not interested in what I'm reading. I learn very little unless the book is interesting and informative."

A few youngsters related interest to reading ability, as in the following quotations:

"If you're used to books with little words and you're assigned a book that you can't make head or tail of, well, that affects your interest."

An eleventh-grade boy who was reading at third-grade level expressed considerable hostility toward reading:

"The subject that I read makes no difference to me. Because I think reading is strictly for the birds. I hate anything to do with reading, such as books, teachers that make me read, etc."

Another poor reader pointed out that "if I read a book I must have a great interest in it because I don't like to read." The lower the reading ability, the higher must be the interest in the subject. This highlights the need to provide especially interesting material for retarded readers.

These youngsters offer various explanations for their lack of interest. One fifteen-year-old girl in the tenth grade commented on a common cause of low interest in a book or assignment, namely, distracting thoughts:

"Sometimes I have things on my mind and that interferes a lot in my reading. If there is some way to get all that's in your mind out I know it would be a big help. But is there a way?"

A boy of the same age expressed a feeling common among gifted youngsters who are bored by repetitious material:

"Doing too much of a certain thing, whether you like it or not at first, will become tiring and boring."

In general, these junior and senior high school students feel strongly about the importance of having interesting reading material and assignments. If the material is uninteresting they will skim over it quickly, not caring what it says, getting little or nothing out of it, not noticing the important points, reluctant to finish reading it, not remembering it, and consequently getting low marks in the subject. If they are interested, they will enjoy reading, search for material on the topic, read it carefully and eagerly, comprehend it with little effort, note the important facts, get more out of their reading, understand and remember it, want to read more and learn more about related matters. Certainly we should know how students feel about the importance of interest and do all we can to provide them with reading material that is high in interest value, as well as with experiences that will help them to develop interests.

Implications for teaching Reading

This overview of interest obviously has implications for the teaching of reading. First, it suggests that we need to know more specifically about the interests of children and young people. Of course, we have always recognized and given lip service to the principles of "knowing the child we teach" and providing "the right book for the right child." However, studies of reading interests have in general failed to recognize the infinite variety and complexity of children's interests. We should first understand more about individual personalities, needs, and purposes, and then, from the vantage point of a wide

acquaintance with books, try to make interesting reading material available to each student.

Second, we can capitalize more than we have done on the integrating effect of interest: we can recognize reading as part of a complex pattern involving the individual's present, past, and future; as an expression of individuality; as part of the total development of the individual.

Third, we can more often follow the student's lead instead of prescribing a reading program for him. By tying reading in with what he is doing, the teacher utilizes the impetus of his interest in his on-going activities. For example, he may need to read certain road signs, or a letter from a friend, or an application blank for getting a part-time job, as well as books or articles essential to carry out a project that is important to him.

Fourth, we should not go to the extreme of depending solely on the student's interest. Helpful as interest can be in motivating a student to put forth his best efforts in learning to read, the teacher must not be misled into thinking that reading disability is simply lack of motivation. The disability is real and no amount of motivation *in itself* can overcome it. It can only be overcome by effective practice and instruction, facilitated by interest. Lack of understanding of basic or key words in a passage kills interest. Interest cannot transcend a serious lack of basic reading skill. Even though the student eagerly opens a book on a subject in which he is interested, his interest will be replaced by a feeling of frustration if the content is too far beyond his reading ability.

Fifth, we may use visual aids to build new interests and make old interests more

vital. Visual aids, properly selected and used, may do this by making certain places, persons, and events more memorable, by relating them to life today, by giving, as the youngsters said, more knowledge about the subject.

Sixth, a radio or TV program giving background on or dramatizing a book or play may associate pleasure with reading that may have been previously obscure or frustrating; it shows the possibility of delight that may be derived from books.

Seventh, the role of reading interest in personal development should be more widely recognized. The individual's gen-

eral interest in self-improvement and self-realization may be reflected in his reading. He wants to identify himself with characters who are vigorous, brave, sincere, kind, helpful, successful. Biography, historical novels, true-to-life accounts of adolescents which show their strivings and frustrations, their achievements and satisfactions, their thoughts and actions in the modern world—all these types of material reinforce the young person's drive toward self-realization. Certainly the dynamic force of interest should be more fully used in the development of reading ability, and in personal development through reading.

IRWIN J. SULOWAY

The Elementary School Newspaper-- Pupil Product or Propaganda Piece?

A great many elementary schools publish what are considered to be school "newspapers." Although their frequency of publication, which varies from ones appearing monthly to those produced only once or twice a year, would make it more proper to call them "magazines" rather than "newspapers," the latter term is the commonly used one. These newspapers are valuable educational assets, and much credit is due to the many teachers who work long and loyally to insure their publication. If the remarks which follow appear to be somewhat harsh, it should be understood that they are intended in no way to reflect upon the many devoted teachers involved in school newspaper production, but rather to encourage administrators and other teachers to support them in what they already know to be a

desirable re-orientation for our elementary school newspapers.

There exists today considerable confusion about the proper functions of elementary school newspapers. This is not strange: in many schools the newspapers developed like Topsy, they just grew. Since today they have acquired permanent status and represent a considerable financial outlay, it is important that we try to determine their proper functions.

School newspapers apparently have nine major reasons for being if one is to judge by the commonly mentioned purposes of such papers.

1. The school newspaper provides motivated writing and reading practice for the entire school.

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2. Work on a school newspaper will improve the writing ability of staff members.
3. The school newspaper is a means of unifying the school.
4. The school newspaper serves to solidify desirable school-community relationships.
5. The school newspaper is a means by which the administration can communicate with the pupils.
6. The school newspaper is "good publicity" for the school.
7. The school newspaper is a communication instrument for the parent teacher association.
8. The school newspaper helps to produce tomorrow's journalists.
9. The school newspaper raises funds for the school.

There is probably a bit of validity in every one of these functions, but this bit of validity is confusing. It tends to make us embrace all nine functions with equal ardor when in reality some need emphasis while others should be almost forgotten. Some of the functions just mentioned are eminently proper ones for a school newspaper, some are of limited propriety, and some are of so little propriety as to be almost illegitimate functions. Let us look at each in some detail.

The major function and indeed the major purpose of a school newspaper is to provide natural, motivated writing and reading practice for all pupils in a school. When pupils write not just for teacher but for possible publication and consumption by their fellow pupils, they are motivated to a high degree. When they summarize a class trip to the zoo, they are actually writing for an audience many of whom did not know the class went there until they read about it in the school newspaper; they are not writing to please an unpleasable teacher or to relate to classmates what they already know. And similarly the finished newspaper should be a valuable reading

experience for all who can read it. The pupils are reading about friends and acquaintances, the topics are within their ken, and the difficulty level is generally appropriate to the reader. There is a sense of involvement in the subject matter that practically no other non-fiction reading can produce. Here then is the basic function of the school newspaper—to provide motivated writing and reading experiences for the pupils.

There is no denying that a school newspaper serves also to improve the ease and accuracy with which the regular staff members write the American language. These pupils are caught up in the spirit of newspaper production and when writing for the paper will strive for clarity, coherence, and even correct comma usage as never before. They will learn new things about writing and call it fun rather than work. Surely this is a legitimate function of such newspapers.

Valid too is the assumption that the newspaper serves to unite individual classrooms into a school. Because of the relative isolation of pupils in one classroom from those of another, because so many activities of an elementary school are room-wide rather than school-wide, it is possible for two students to graduate at the same time from a large school and yet, because they were in different rooms, not even know each other. The newspaper can do much to make individual members not merely of a classroom but of a school and help also to draw individuals together.

To a limited degree, the school newspaper can serve also as a means of introducing the child to his community and solidifying school-community relationships. To the extent that it can advise stu-

dents of the opportunities available at local parks, libraries, and recreation centers the school newspaper should do so. We should however bear in mind that its primary functions are those of providing motivated language experiences for the entire school and for the staff in particular, and that of unifying the school.

Although the newspaper is a logical place for administrative messages to pupils, administrators should remember that this is by no means the basic function of the paper. Principals' and superintendents' messages of importance to the pupils have a rightful place in these publications, but the interest such messages have for the readers and not their source should determine the relative importance accorded them in terms of position, headlines, and emphasis. I view with misgivings the newspaper which invariably has its first pages devoted primarily to messages from the principal, the superintendent, and other "important" sources.

Related in some ways to the foregoing is the generally false notion that the newspaper must be "good publicity" for the school. The school which publishes a paper to impress outsiders—whether they be parents, community leaders, or the board of education—usually fails with the pupils, who constitute the paper's true audience. Sometimes this takes the form of articles clearly intended for the benefit of adults, sometimes it involves writing about topics of little or no interest to students. May I cite one example from a local school newspaper? The story appeared essentially as it will be read. Only the names have been changed to protect the guilty.

On Monday, April 13, the Johnson School's famous P.T.A. was privileged to

hear the dynamic Dr. John Jones, assistant superintendent, speak. His address was titled "Fundamentals of the Future." Dr. Jones not only stressed the opportunities given to students for learning, but also answered questions presented to him that evening.

Dr. Jones has always been a forceful speaker, and fathers, as well as mothers and teachers, were certainly stimulated and impressed by his sound advice and enlightening ideas concerning vocational counseling.

In addition to his talk, the Quartet entertained by bringing back fond memories in their renditions of the old songs everyone loved to hear.

Refreshments served in the library concluded this successful evening meeting.

Here, you can see, is an article calculated to be well received by Dr. Jones, to make the P.T.A. happy, and to appeal to parents rather than their children. I do not think it belonged on the first page of a newspaper supposedly intended for elementary school pupils.

Sometimes the desire to "impress" results in insistence that every story in the newspaper be a highly polished, errorless production, thus making it appear that all pupils are superior writers. This of course is attained only by having the teacher rewrite materials until they meet adult standards. Thoughtful adults, it seems to me, will not be impressed by this sort of thing and will have better yardsticks by which to measure the success of teaching and administration than by perusing the school newspaper.

Equally dubious is the use of a large portion of the school newspaper as a publicity medium for the parent-teacher association. Messages from the P.T.A. to the parents should be sent either as a P.T.A. bulletin or in the form of letters to the

parents. They should not be used in the newspaper in preference to the children's own writing. This rule is intended not to banish the P.T.A. from the paper but rather to keep it in a definitely secondary role, confined to items which have some interest and appeal to the youngsters for whom the paper is published.

Let us put to rest once and for all the notion that our school newspapers train tomorrow's journalists. Journalism is a highly specialized profession and our pupils are no more prepared to enter it after work on a school newspaper than they are to enter medical practice on the basis of our health lessons. Most articles in the elementary school newspaper should be written essentially in the same form as other writing experiences in the grades. Few are really "news" stories, and few indeed of our pupils have mastered the fundamentals of ordinary writing well enough to go on at this age to the study of the style and form of true news stories. No, ours is not the task of developing tomorrow's Walter Lippmanns or even Walter Winchells.

Another function of only incidental

validity is that of raising money through the publication and sale of the school newspaper. The uncared-for financial needs of a typical elementary school are many, and if the newspaper can occasionally alleviate a few of these, well and good. But the newspaper should be viewed essentially as a means of publishing as much pupil writing as possible at a price which will make the paper available to all. Profits plowed back into the next issue of the newspaper so that more pupils can experience the joy—and subsequent motivation—of seeing their work in print are certainly profits well used.

Let us then, when planning our school newspapers, forget that they might be used to make us "look good," to impress others, to train journalists, or to make money. Let us remember instead that the newspaper is perhaps the best single means we have of providing motivated writing and reading experiences for our pupils, and that it can create a sense of identification with the group which is the basis of good citizenship. These are worthy educational aims. Let us confine ourselves to them and produce truly worthwhile school newspapers.

National Council of Teachers of English

Councilletter

FROM THE FIRST VICE-PRESIDENT

What the American public talks about is a subject of constant amusement and concern. We are born critics, quarter backs, and straw bosses, inclined to believe for the moment at least that our individual opinions provide the solutions for all ills. And so at afternoon and evening social gatherings and for aught I know at morning *kaffeeklatsches* and midnight bouts, our men and women explode on every conceivable issue. We talk freely of sports, politics, local and national gossip, science, money, automobiles, women, and perhaps less often of books, music, art, philosophy, and religion. Poorly informed on occasion, rife with prejudice, we proceed nevertheless to set matters straight according to our lights.

But I venture to suggest that if a digest could be made of all these discussions, the education of our children would stand high on the popularity list. Few social gatherings are able, or for that matter try, to avoid it for long. It is indeed everybody's business, and he knows it. Nor do I doubt for a moment that English teaching would come up handily with first honors in this category. Everybody "took" English at some time and consequently is abundantly able to offer advice.

Well, let us say it is a typical evening—the guests are comfortably seated, smoking assiduously and ready for an argument. The latest uneventful sports event has been dealt with and local gossip is paling scandalously when some one innocently remarks that her little Amy (aren't you tired of Mary and Johnny?), now in 2-B, can't spell *cat*. Thesis stated, the debate begins. A moderately unsuccessful male, fiftyish and nostalgic, harks back to the days of the

blue-back speller and praises the pedagogic virtues of a revered schoolmarm. A bright-eyed young mother only ten years away from classic halls and current methods takes up the cudgels and avers that her little Willie in 2-A can spell dozens of words, including *irascible*. Everybody takes sides, and the breach widens until suddenly some one discovers that he has an eight-o'clock conference the next morning and must leave at once.

Elsewhere a somewhat older group is discussing the virtues and faults of the local high-school reading list. In spelling-bee fashion they choose sides. One side asserts that *The Merchant of Venice*, *The Idylls of the King*, *Silas Marner*, *The House of Seven Gables*, and Poe's short stories must form the base of any really solid curriculum for high school sophomores. The other insists that *The Atlantic Monthly*, the *New York Times*, and a wise selection of readings which reflect the current sociological, political, and economic scene should reinforce the old stand-bys. One contestant states that his literary life stemmed from his first acquaintance with Silas; his opponent is convinced that hers began with *Little Amy and the Glug-Glug Fairy*. This or a similar impasse usually occurs about quitting time.

College students too have parents who are frequently disturbed publicly by the freshman English courses their offspring are taking. The literature of course is "just about what they had in high school," but the composition courses are unendurable. Oh for the good old days of Latin syntax, Canby and Opdycke, and Woolley's *Handbook*!

Meanwhile, the discussions continue: The White House Conference was the most important step in education during this decade; the

Conference was undemocratic, rigged, and futile. Mr. Arthur Bestor is the voice of one crying in the wilderness; Mr. Bestor is living in an impossible past, his reasoning and his figures are incorrect, and he repeats himself flagrantly. Segregation, Federal aid, the superior child, the teaching load, the teacher shortage, group dynamics, improved certification—make your own list from these random suggestions—will be discussed in forceful and usually friendly fashion at parents' meetings and social gatherings everywhere.

And what shall we teachers of English do? Encourage discussion of course and hope that more of it will be translated into action. What could be worse than being ignored? What more complimentary than having our problems on everybody's tongue? We don't agree among ourselves on everything, we aren't subject to "line" orders, but if we are wise and tolerant and informed, every one of us has an unique opportunity for local and national service of the first order.

Brice Harris

It's Your Convention Program FROM THE SECOND VICE-PRESIDENT

Widespread participation is a mark of NCTE convention programs, figures compiled in the NCTE office reveal. In the three conventions of 1954, 1955, and 1956, held in Detroit, New York, and St. Louis, a total of 826 persons had parts in the program. This figure is exclusive of the several hundred members of local committees responsible for arrangements in the host cities.

Figures were also compiled to show the extent of overlapping participation—that is, the same persons on the program in two or more successive years. In 1955, 58 of the participants had appeared on the 1954 program, but 175 had not—a 24.9 percentage of repeaters. In 1956, 40 had appeared on the 1955 program, but 185 had not—a 17.3 percentage of repeaters.

Only 25 persons appeared on all three convention programs, and 18 of these were officers or former officers of the Council. Thus only 3 per cent of the total participants appeared three times.

In most years, college teachers participate more extensively than do elementary or high school teachers, but as many as 43 elementary teachers and 98 high school teachers have been heard from in one convention. In addition, as many as 51 administrators, persons from businesses or professions other than teaching, and "unclassified" speakers have been on the program for a single convention. Of the college teachers, half or more are primarily interested in the college teaching of English, but a large number devote much of their time to working with elementary or high school teachers.

Appearing on programs during the past three years have been teachers from 39 states, the District of Columbia, Hawaii, Puerto Rico, Canada, Belgium, Japan, and Thailand. Not represented—but welcome—were three Eastern states, three Western, two Southern, and one Midwestern. New York supplied the largest number of participants, followed in order by Michigan, Illinois, California, and Pennsylvania. Other states with ten or more participants each were Colorado, Florida, Georgia, Indiana, Iowa, Kansas, Maryland, Massachusetts, Minnesota, Missouri, New Jersey, Ohio, Texas, Washington, and Wisconsin.

Those who attended and perhaps participated in discussions, even though their names did not appear in the program, could not be counted exactly, but it is estimated that between six and seven thousand *different* persons have attended NCTE convention in the past three years; registration statistics show that they came from all the states.

Always those responsible for convention programs are looking for additional qualified persons for large or small program spots. If you know of especially able NCTE members who have not been heard at previous conventions, or

if you want particularly to hear certain persons again, send names, addresses, and special qualifications to the 1957 Second Vice-President. Don't forget the addresses and special qualifications, because otherwise the names will be useless. Obviously, not everyone suggested can be invited, often because no suitable type of session is included. It will not be considered immodest if you name yourself.

To be considered for this fall, your suggestions should be mailed *at once* to Professor Harold B. Allen, Department of English, University of Minnesota, Minneapolis. Suggestions received after early May will be of little use this year.

Harold B. Allen

SECTION NOMINEES

The Nominating Committee of the Elementary Section presents the following nominations for members of the Section Committee and NCTE Directors, to be elected by mail in May. The Council Constitution provides that additional nominees may be placed on the ballot upon petition of 15 members of the Section. This year's nominating committee, elected by the Section at the St. Louis convention, consists of Ann Bowman, Boston, Massachusetts, and John Maxwell, Racine, Wisconsin.

ELEMENTARY SECTION COMMITTEE

Three-Year Term (two to be elected):

Alice Robinson, Board of Education, Rockville, Maryland

Irwin Suloway, Chicago Teachers College, Chicago, Illinois

Norman H. Naas, Mt. Diablo School District, Concord, California

Joan Carey, University of Florida, Gainesville, Florida

ELEMENTARY SECTION REPRESENTATIVES ON THE BOARD OF DIRECTORS

Three-Year Term (two to be elected):

Althea Beery, Cincinnati Public Schools, Cincinnati, Ohio

Lillian Paukner, Milwaukee Public Schools, Milwaukee, Wisconsin

Marcella Bernstein, Lone Oak Elementary School, Rockville, Maryland

Grace A. Dorsey, State Department of Education, Baltimore, Maryland

Summer Workshops, 1957

During the summer of 1957 the National Council of Teachers of English will co-sponsor workshops at the following colleges, and possibly at one or two others. More details will be given next month.

Alabama College—three-week workshop with emphasis on grammar and oral and written composition. For details write Professor M. L. Orr, Sr., Alabama College, Montevallo, Alabama.

Stanford University—Pacific Coast English Conference. Write Professor Alfred Grommon, Stanford University, Stanford, California.

Purdue University—three-week workshop emphasizing linguistics and composition teaching. Write Professor Russell Cosper, Purdue University, Lafayette, Indiana.

Iowa State Teachers College—two-week workshop, focused on literature for adolescents. Write Professor John Cowley, Iowa State Teachers College, Cedar Falls, Iowa.

North Texas State College—six-week workshop, either half of which may be taken, the first devoted to composition, the second to literature. Write Professor Ernest S. Clifton, North Texas State College, Denton, Texas.

Marshall College, Huntington, West Virginia—three-week workshop stressing junior and senior high school reading. Write Hardy R. Finch, 236 Milbank Avenue, Greenwich, Connecticut.

Windows on the World

The Popular Arts in the Classroom

Edited by PATRICK D. HAZARD



Patrick D. Hazard

The Futility of Cultural Drudgery

There is something mighty lonely about being a teacher of English. When you're introduced as one, the inevitable reply is a half-truculent, half crestfallen, "Boy, I better watch my grammar." An even heavier incubus is ours when it comes to the tradition of cultural drudgery we have in part supported and, indeed, started. By that I mean assigning Homer in the fifth grade (I'm not kidding) and *Julius Caesar* in the tenth, come hell or high water. And if the dolts don't cotton to culture, then off with their empty heads. Nobody stops to explore this paradox: what kept Greek warriors enthralled and Elizabethan apprentices from going about their masters' businesses palls or, better, appals our groups of groundlings. How can popular literature become popular torture? The answer, I think, lies in its being torn out of context: since we can neither give our students the alcoholic background deemed essential at Greek feasts nor fill them in on the rich and complex Greek heritage possessed by everyone listening to a bard, and because we cannot, generally, present a Shakespearean play with the tense excitement and holiday spirit assumed as one entered the door of the Globe Theatre, popular Greek and Elizabethan literature falls flat. Now good teachers can and do make up for this missing context with intellectual frameworks of varying degrees of effectiveness. But I think we insufficiently realize the really complicated task we set ourselves when we attempt to introduce children to the culture of bygone generations. We think that because the words are in their vocabulary (as in a watered down version of *The Iliad*) or that because they can laboriously follow the plot (as in *Julius Caesar*) that therefore they *get* it. Personally, in most instances I think we present the average student

with an elaborate form of cultural drudgery. Results: Look over any drugstore newsstand, and try to figure out why most of our students revert to primitive escapism in the fan or expose magazines. Let me get way out on a professional limb by saying that when I saw an intelligent looking woman reading *Confidential* in the train station the other day, I felt a guilt that is collectively ours as English teachers. By imposing ridiculously challenging reading tasks or by being satisfied with ritualistic but ineffective presentation of the classics, we do nothing so surely as force the majority to revert to a barbaric level of print. I am not saying that English teachers are solely responsible for this literary atavism, but I am saying that other groups that share our responsibility (fly-by-night publishers, for example) are less willing to admit their share of the blame. Our part in the fiasco can be changed easily. I think we must realize that road to cultural immaturity in America has been partly paved by the good but unrealistic intentions of English teachers who rigidly insisted on the highest esthetic standards in their curricula.

Standards are things to be achieved, not ukases to be imposed. "Culture," we are inclined to forget, has its roots in the soil of popular taste and aspiration or it withers. The term itself, after all, is redolent of agriculture and cultivation. We should find, I think, much greater success in the humanities curriculum in high school were we to base our elementary curriculum on the popular arts of TV, film, music and visual design. We make our students effective critics of the popular arts by showing

Mr. Hazard is Assistant Professor of English at Trenton State Teachers College, Trenton, New Jersey.

them how to identify excellence within these popular forms and by encouraging them to demand through their daily patronage more of the same excellence. Given a generation of thorough criticism of popular culture in the elementary school, high schools and colleges could then build on this indispensable base with meaningful study of Greek and Elizabethan culture. And, just as important, maturing taste would force the pornographers of print to the fringes of decent society where they could then pander to the simpleminded and foolish without destroying vast sections of the public mind, as they are now doing.

Popular culture, let it be emphasized, is not intrinsically inferior to the established art forms in our curricula. Musical comedy, for example, to the hurrahs of those professionally involved, rapidly approaches the long sought "lyric theatre." An ideal class introduction to this art is the forthcoming Rodgers and Hammerstein TV premiere, a musical version of "Cinderella," CBS-TV, March 24th, pre-empting the Ed Sullivan Show. To prepare your students for this long performance, it might be worth-while to have them write short critiques of their favorite entry on the Ed Sullivan Shows that precede the telecasting of "Cinderella." There is a definite advantage in doing this criticism regularly and displaying it on a popular arts bulletin board or in a column in the school paper: it gets children into the habit of discussing their own experience of popular culture and the prestige of print and display induces more mature expression. Further, a TV spectacular like this one can impress upon your students that they can take their fun seriously. Isn't that essentially what all of us do when our taste for entertainment matures? I think of Robert Frost, for example, who describes his own poetry as a kind of intelligent fooling around. It's the degree of human intelligence involved in the fooling around that counts. Taking the musical comedy seriously means being aware of its history (and listening to any number of the LP's listed in

the Schwann LP Catalog), being aware of its form (and realizing that a musical like a poem has structure), and being aware of its relationship to related artistic forms (direct avenues to both drama and symphonic music.) All these phases of appreciation make natural reading and writing. Mature patrons of the musical don't emerge full-blown from one class assignment; their maturity inches upward through a whole series of class experiences with sympathetically critical teachers at all levels of grade and high schools.

Further, TV has in a sense destroyed the distinction between popular and elite art forms. Some time this spring, on NBC TV "Producer's Showcase," Sol Hurok will present Sadler's Wells Ballet in a performance of the ballet "Cinderella." That ballet company's first TV performance made ballet a popular art for me, completely removing the hex of effeminacy and fake artificiality that I had heretofore considered sufficient reason for not being interested! I have since braved Manhattan traffic twice in several months to see other ballets on stage. I wonder how many other teachers, and we're a culturally ambitious lot, have had similar experience with TV as a democratizer of the elite arts. I saw my first opera on TV as well as the succeeding five; I have seen more Broadway quality stage plays in the last two years than I had in the previous ten years of active patronage of the arts; and my TV seats have been considerably closer than the rear balcony ones I can usually afford (or can't afford) at the theatre. As with the popular form of musical comedy, the elite art of ballet fairly cries out for the enriching perspectives of print. And print is not the only legitimate and mature avenue of investigation and expression: I can envisage a week-long symposium on ballet as an art form following the Monday TV ballet. Such a symposium could include student paintings of the most famous ballets, demonstrations of the basic dance vocabulary by the class terpsichoreans, commentary on LP's of famous scores by

the musically inclined. Monday before the ballet could profitably be used for background material on the TV ballet presented by class researchers.

The excitement and vitality of TV can be used to give powerful impetus to the language arts part of our responsibility. The medium also provides subject matter whose very ephemeral quality demands the kind of long, careful look that only classroom discussion can give young people. When we help young people explore their own taste and reactions to culture, popular and otherwise, we perform the only role that is a fruitful one before the level of graduate school, where students are properly motivated by their very presence there. We have played the losing game of promoting cultural drudgery too long already. It's always less prudent to step on the hands of climbers under duress than to urge aspiring students upwards to ever higher levels of taste.

The following lists of books and articles have been compiled by Rose Mincieli, Ethna Sheehan, and Elizabeth Lockhart (Children's Services, The Queens Borough Public Library), for the Women's National Book Association.

BALLET

Teachers' Background Material

Balanchine's Complete Stories of the Great Ballets. By George Balanchine. Edited by Francis Mason, with an Annotated Selection of Recordings by Jacques Fray. Doubleday. c1954. \$5.95. Authoritatively written, this is a most comprehensive, action by action interpretation of 131 great ballets. It includes an enlightening chapter on ballet for your children by one of the outstanding choreographers and ballet masters of today. The glossary, annotated selection of ballet recordings, and an index give it a scholarly approach.

The Borzoi Book of Ballets. By Grace Robert. Knopf. c1952. \$5.00. O. P. This collection of ballets is listed even though it is out of print, because it gives invaluable historical background information concerning each ballet and gives a comparative analysis of one with another. Some of the lesser-known ballets will be found in this book too.

The Victor Book of Ballets and Ballet Music. By Robert Lawrence. Illustrated. Simon and Schuster. 1950. \$5.00. The history, stories, and excerpts from the musical compositions of 130 ballets are

analysed and described for professionals, teachers, advanced students, and others with a knowledge of the art of the ballet. Profuse illustrations. The index of recordings, composers, plus the general index, add to its value of serious readers.

Art and Science of Teaching Ballet. By A. Roje. *Dance Magazine.* 28:42-3. December 1954.

Dancers' Schooling. *Dance Magazine.* 28:17-19. November 1954. 28:50. December 1954.

Dorothy Fisher's Junior Ballet of Seattle. By E. MacDonald. *Dance Magazine.* 29:49. May 1955.

Young Dancer Salutes Junior Ballet, Seattle. By R. Woody. *Dance Magazine.* 29:49. May 1956.

Young Dancer Salutes the American Youth Ballet of Baton Rouge. By L. Rumley. *Dance Magazine.* 29:50-1. June 1955.

The above articles will all prove helpful and interesting.

Biographies of Performers and Composers. For children and young people.

Dance to the Piper. By Agnes De Mille. Illustrated. Little, Brown. 1952. \$4.50.

Mature young ballet enthusiasts will find inspiration and pleasure in this autobiography of an American girl who surmounted difficulties of one kind and another to achieve the heights of modern ballet.

Dancing Star: The Story of Anna Pavlova. By Gladys Malvern. Messner. 1942. \$2.95. The Russian ballerina's delightful personality and wonderful character glow through the pages of this loving biography. Though the writing is sprightly, the reader is made aware, all the way through, that sheer hard work coupled with talent brought Pavlova to the heights. For ages 11-14.

Famous Ballet Dancers. By Jane T. McConnell. Crowell. 1955. \$2.75. We read here the inspiring stories of such great ballet dancers as Pavlova, Tall Chief, Markova, Fonteyn, Agnes De Mille, and learn what motivated them to choose—sometimes in the face of hardships—the exacting career of the ballet, which demands artistic perfection. An inspiring biography for the ballet student who intends to make a career of this art.

Stormy Victory: The Story of Tchaikovsky. Messner. 1942. \$2.95. Changing times, changing family fortunes, hardship and achievement marked the life of the Russian composer who brought so much loveliness into the world. In addition to the music the book includes good background information on nineteenth-century Russia and on Russian home life. For ages 10-14.

The Story of Peter Tchaikovsky. By Opal Wheeler. Dutton. 1953. \$3.50. A pleasing and simply written biography for younger readers.

Stories of the Famous Ballets

We have listed below some of the ballets suitable for children, for which we have found background stories. The stories are mentioned beneath the appropriate ballet:

CINDERELLA

Cinderella. By Marcia Brown. Illustrated by the author. Scribner. 1954. \$2.50. (Many other sources. *This is a particularly attractive book.*) book.)

A MIDSUMMER NIGHT'S DREAM

Tales from Shakespeare. By Charles and Mary Lamb. Macmillan. 1950. \$2.50.

MOTHER GOOSE SUITE

Book of Nursery and Mother Goose Rhymes. By Marguerite De Angeli. Illustrated by the author. Doubleday. 1954. \$5.00. (Many other collections available.)

PETER AND THE WOLF

Peter and the Wolf. By Sergei Sergeevich Prokofiev. Illustrated by Warren Chappell. Knopf. 1940. \$2.50.

PETROUCHKA

Petrouchka. Book by Stravinsky and Alexandre Benois. Told by Robert Lawrence. Illustrated by A. Serebriakoff. Random House. 1940.

THE RED SHOES

Fairy Tales. By Hans Christian Andersen. Illustrated by Tasha Tudor. Oxford. 1945. \$3.50. (Also many other editions available)

ROMEO AND JULIET

Tales from Shakespeare. By Charles and Mary Lamb. Macmillan. 1950. \$2.50.

THE SNOW MAIDEN

Old Peter's Russian Tales (*Daughter of the Snow* is title of the story). By Arthur Ransome. Nelson. 1938. \$2.00.

SONG OF THE NIGHTINGALE

Fairy Tales (*The Nightingale* is title of the story). By Hans Christian Andersen. Illustrated by Tasha Tudor. Oxford. 1945. \$3.50. (Many other editions available.)

Children's Background Books

The Ballet. By Hugh Fisher. Crowell. 1954. \$2.50. Historical background; discussions of modern presentations; hints on careers in the field. Bibliography, glossary, excellent photographs. For serious enthusiasts ages 11-17.

Ballet for Beginners. By Nancy Draper and Margaret F. Atkinson. Knopf. 1951. \$3.75. Detailed instruction, illustrated by numerous photographs. The book includes hints on home practicing. There is a brief history of the ballet with information on famous dancers. Bibliography. For ages 9-17.

Ballet for Mary. By Emma L. Brock. Illustrated by the author. Knopf. 1954. \$2.50. An awkward, lovable little girl has a very good time and inci-

dentally acquires a modicum of poise and grace—through her ballet lessons. A light-hearted story for ages 8-10.

Ballet Shoes. By Noel Streatfeild. Random House. 1937. \$2.95. The Fossil sisters' hard work, failures, and successes makes an absorbing story for girls 10-13, while at the same time it gives a clear picture of everyday life in a London professional school.

First Steps in Ballet. By Thalia Mara and Lee Wyndham. Garden City. 1955. \$2.00. A very simple and clear introduction by two experts. For young children.

Fun with Ballet. By Mae B. Freeman. Random House. 1952. \$1.50. Large photographs clarify the different positions and movements. For ages 8 and up.

Gloria, Ballet Dancer. By Gladys Malvern. Messner. 1956. \$2.95. Career story about the struggles of a young American girl to realize her dream of becoming a ballet dancer. Sequel is *Prima Ballerina*. (1951). For girls 12-16.

Hold Fast to Your Dreams. By Catherine Blanton. Messner. 1955. \$2.75. A Southern Negro girl, who wants to make ballet-dancing her career, tries to break through the invisible wall of prejudice. A story for ages 12-16.

Jennifer Dances. By Eunice Y. Smith. Bobbs, Merrill. 1954. \$2.75. Story of a little country girl of a generation ago who is enrolled in a ballet class when she visits her aunt in Chicago. Jennifer enjoys the work, demonstrates talent, and above all develops her imagination. For ages 9-11.

Katrinka. By Helen E. Haskell. Dutton. 1915. \$3.00. Down through the years girls 9-13 have loved this story of a Russian girl who studied in the Imperial ballet school, worked hard for success, and won her heart's desire from the Czar.

Kiki Dances. By Charlotte Steiner. Illustrated by the author. Doubleday. 1949. \$1.50. A gay picture book about a small girl who wanted to become a ballet dancer. For the youngest readers.

Lightning Strikes Twice. By Marguerite Dickson. Nelson. 1947. \$2.50. Ellen takes things much too easily in the dancing class until competition shocks her into doing her best. A story for girls 11-15.

The Little Ballet Dancer. By Monica Stirling. Illustrated by Helen Stone. Lothrop. 1953. \$2.50. Little Jeanne's training at the Ballet School of the Paris Opera Company is a story told in words and pictures filled with the atmosphere of France. For ages 8-11.

Veronica at Sadler's Wells. By Lorna Hill. Holt. 1954. \$2.75. This story of an English girl's development into a ballet dancer is mediocre in style, but it is fast moving, and is valuable for the emphasis it gives to hard work and dedication to a cause. Teen-age.

The Educational Scene

Edited by WILLIAM A. JENKINS¹



William A. Jenkins

Bay City experiment

There have been several articles recently about the "Bay City (Mich.) Teacher Aide Program," the philanthropically supported study to determine whether very large classes can be taught, at no sacrifice in quality, by a teacher and a teacher aide. Some of the reports claimed that the program was a panacea for all ills and problems in education. Sometimes they have said that some members of the education profession have seen fit to condemn the experiment without proper observation or study.

Only one report has been made by the Bay City Public Schools, that by Supt. Paul W. Briggs. Mr. Briggs' own report says:

"It has been successful. It is our belief that the quality of education has been maintained in the experiment at a comparable level to the general program in the Bay City public schools. We have found that it is not only possible to maintain a good program of academic achievement; but also, in the less tangible area of child growth and development, we have been able to attain very satisfactory results. Good aides have an active interest in children, and under proper guidance can be very helpful in creating the kind of classroom atmosphere which encourages wholesome personality development. In many cases, the aide has been able to relieve the teacher of some of the routine activities so that she may devote more time to becoming better acquainted with the individual child in the classroom.

"Our staff has developed a strong conviction that, while the teacher aide program can be successful in the crisis situation, there exists certain dangers in its promiscuous application and careless administration. They recommend that the following practices be followed in the establishment and administration of the program:

1. Carefully select quality individuals as aides.
2. Inaugurate a strong program of professional supervision.
3. Place the aide in a compatible situation with a good cooperative teacher.
4. Provide an adequate in-service training program.
5. Place the program in a room large enough to accommodate the larger class and provide sufficient additional facilities to allow increased class activities.
6. Inform the public and staff regarding the program so that it will be properly understood and received.

"The staff of the Bay City public schools still feel that they would prefer to have smaller classes with regular teachers than to have larger classes and teacher aides. They recognize, however, that the teacher shortage problem is so severe that this may not always be possible. They believe that the teacher aide program has much to offer. . . ."

The study has gone on for four years, financed by the Fund for the Advancement of Education. The teacher aides were given a special certificate on a year to year basis, while being paid an average of \$45 a week. They carried on clerical, housekeeping, and minor instructional activities."

Outstanding educational events of 1956

What were the ten outstanding educational events of 1956? Since ideas on the subject will vary greatly, we offer you this list suggested by Ben Brodinsky, editor of the *Teacher's Letter*. We have omitted the comments made by Mr. Brodinsky, and those we would like to make.

¹Mr. Jenkins is Associate Professor of English and Elementary Education, University of Wisconsin, Milwaukee.

1. Clinton, Tennessee, school district asks the Federal Government for help in enforcing integration in its public schools.

2. Survey shows 300,000 Negro children in classrooms hitherto reserved for whites.

3. Lawrence G. Derthick is named U. S. Commissioner of Education.

4. Congress defeats bills designed to aid school districts struggling with classroom shortages.

5. President's Committee on Education Beyond the High School publishes first interim report.

6. President Eisenhower convenes first national conference on physical fitness for American youth.

7. Enrollments in all schools, colleges and universities reach new peak after 12 years of consecutive increases.

8. Science education, from first grade through college, becomes grave concern of American educators.

9. White House Conference on Education sends its final report to the President.

10. Bay City, Michigan, declares its teacher-aid program a success after 5 years of experimentation; national leaders in education question its value.

Recordings for you

For your own personal collection, perhaps you would like to obtain some of the following recordings:

Readings by Siobhan McKenna, current star of Shaw's *Saint Joan*. Three 12" LP records. \$4.98 each. Poems of Yeats, lyrics of Joyce and Stephens, and ballads and folksongs; (2) Irish folk and fairy tales; (3) reading of "Piccoli." Spoken Arts, 275 Seventh Avenue, New York 1.

The School for Scandal (Sheridan). Angel Records. \$12.98. Introduction by Alan Dent and musical introduction to set the eighteenth century atmosphere. The cast includes Claire Bloom, Cecil Parker, and Baliol Holloway.

Saint Joan (Shaw). RCA Victor. \$14.98. Slightly abridged recording with original cast, including Siobhan McKenna.

Frank Pettingell Presents Oscar Wilde. Westminster. \$4.98. Fine reading of biographical excerpts and fairy tales.

Paul Rogers in Scenes from Shakespeare. Westminster. \$4.98. This star of the Old Vic Company reads the "Tomorrow and Tomorrow" soliloquy from *Macbeth* and lines written for Bottom, John of Gaunt, Mercutio, and Falstaff.

Other recordings

We are pleased by the increasing number and quality of recordings for children, or dramatizations and story-tellings of their literature. Such records have long been needed and their potential for motivating children to read is great indeed.

We have not evaluated those listed below, but merely include them as a sample of recent releases. You will note that many are in the relatively new "talking book speed," 16 rpm.

Best of Mark Twain. Four records. 16 rpm. \$4.95. Audio Book Company, St. Joseph, Mich. Seventeen stories and sketches.

The Nature of Poetry. One 12" LP record. \$4.98. Spoken Arts, 2755 Seventh Avenue, New York 1. Dr. Frank Baxter presents the discussion.

Gulliver's Travels. One record. 16 rpm. \$1.49. Audio Book Company. "A Voyage to Lilliput" and "A Voyage to Brobdingnag" are read by Hal Gerard.

A Child's Garden of Verses. One 16 rpm record. \$1.49. Audio Book Company. Elinor Gene Hoffman reads 52 poems.

King of the Golden River and The Great Stone Face. One 16 rpm record. \$1.49. Audio Book Company, St. Joseph, Mich. Read by Elinor Gene Hoffman.

How much AV equipment?

Periodically the question of how much audio-visual equipment a school needs arises.

The newly-won prestige of this science in education has increased in use, but whether it is up to a desirable level is still debated. Even the experts don't agree.

AV is growing, however. In 1954, when a comprehensive survey was made among 2500 city school systems, the per capita expenditure for audio-visual education was \$.65 per pupil per school year. This figure was double that for 1946. Recently, NEA's Division of Audio-Visual Instruction estimated that \$3.50-5.00 per pupil was needed for materials and equipment. A bit earlier, the Oregon Audio-Visual Association gave this list of costs necessary for providing minimum standards for instructional materials:

In school systems with 200 or fewer pupils	\$2.00
In school systems with 200 to 400 pupils	1.75
In school systems with 400 to 1000 pupils	1.50
In school systems with 2,000 or more pupils	1.00

And yet another figure was found last year in an article by Glenn E. Murdock in *Nation's Schools*. Mr. Murdock estimated an expenditure of \$10.50-12.00 per pupil for schools starting an a-v program, and about \$4.75-5.50 per pupil per year in order to maintain an adequate program.

Two positions are taken by the experts. One group says that too many variables exist to permit an accurate list of the minima. An example of this position was the view expressed by Paul C. Reed in the September number of *Educational Screen and AV Guide*. In part, Mr. Reed said:

"Think of all the variables. What school are you talking about? How many teachers are there? How well does the community and state support the school? What are the teacher attitudes toward the use of audio-visual materials?

"How much equipment? The amount cannot be stated in generalized terms that

will serve all schools. But the principle can be stated: Teachers have a right to make whatever use of whatever audio-visual materials they need whenever they believe they can be used to advantage.

The other position might be shown by what the Audio-Visual Commission on Public Information sets for minimum standards: not less than 1% of a school's instructional budget. In addition, the Commission lists specific minima in equipment:

- 1 16mm sound projector per 300 students, or at least one per school building
- 1 filmstrip projector per 200 students, or at least one per building
- 1 opaque projector per school building
- 1 three-speed record player per kindergarten class, and one per every other 5 classrooms
- 1 tape recorder per 300 pupils
- 1 am-fm radio receiver per every five classrooms
- 1 projection screen, at least 60 x 60, for every two classrooms
- 1 tv receiver for a school building

The problem, as you can see, is complex. No one today can turn his back on it. Perhaps the solution may be found in facing it squarely. That is, perhaps it is a problem which can best be worked out by an entire school staff's setting standards, after getting a clear picture of just what a large contribution to the curriculum audio-visual materials can make and will make if used thoughtfully.

Good reading, and otherwise

"For Boys and Girls—One Hundred Books to Grow On," selected by Virginia Haviland, Ruth Gagliardo, and Elizabeth Nesbitt, in *McCall's*, November, 1956. "Three veterans in the children's literature field set standards and pick what they consider the best. Many of them were our favorites and are probably yours, even though you may feel as we do, that lists may become dangerously prescriptive. There is a good

balance between old favorites and those books published in the 1940's and 1950's. A brief discussion of each book and publication facts are given.

If you cannot obtain the November *McCall's*, the list is available in pamphlet form. Write to McCall's Modern Homemaker, P. O. Box 1390, Grand Central Station, New York 17. Send 15 cents in coin.

* * *

The balance that is found in the *McCall's* article is not achieved in "Books That Enchant," by Frances Clarke Sayers, in *NEA Journal* for January. Mrs. Sayers thumps for the book that has endured, though a few relatively recent ones do receive notice from her. The old books have the magnificent stories, the realities of people and growth of character, and the highest peaks of originality, she says.

* * *

Recommendations even more in the direction of classic children's books were made by Dorothy Thompson in the *Ladies' Home Journal* for October. "Why and What Should Johnny Read?" is the title of her article. She is scathing in her denunciation of children's readers with their deliberately scaled, limited, and repetitive vocabularies; she completely ignores laws of learning, most of which were established after the books she recommends were published. Most of the *assumptions* of the people who wrote the books, or chose the passages for inclusion in the readers, are accepted unquestioningly by her; psychological knowledge of today is ignored.

It is disturbing that the several million readers of *Ladies' Home Journal* should be told that a sixth grade child should be able to read Disraeli, Pitt, Walpole, Addison, Blackstone, or Bulwer-Lytton. The ambition is admirable, but to pose this as a realistic expectation is ridiculous. And when the idea is accompanied with sly suggestion that because sixth graders today can't read these authors *comprehendingly* (even today they probably can *say* the words!),

teachers of reading doing something less than a satisfactory job, it becomes annoying. After presenting her panacea, Miss Thompson ends her article with this sentence: "And whatever changes, these truths abide."

* * *

Several years ago in this column we recommended use of the opaque projector to flash a theme on a screen where the entire class could see it and discuss it. The idea was not original with us. Now Dr. Alfred H. Marks offers what we consider an even better approach to the idea. In "Grading Themes by Lantern Light" (*Educational Screen and AV Guide* for November) he poses an answer to the question "how do you best share one child's writing with the entire class?" Reading aloud makes the exercise one in listening. It is a lot of trouble for the teacher to mimeograph the themes beforehand. Enter the opaque projector once again.

Dr. Marks recommends, after two years' experimentation at Ohio State University, that the themes be flashed on a white chalkboard and that the corrections be made with a black glass-marking pencil. For a chalkboard he suggests Marlite, an enamelled wallboard, and he found that Blaisdell glass-marking pencils, which erase easily with a perfectly clean, dry cloth, worked best. We refer you to *Educational Screen and AV Guide* for complete details on the experiment.

Curriculum materials

Source Material for the Improvement of Reading, 1952-1956. Useful bibliographies and sources for improving pupils' reading. Emphasis is periodical materials and continuing sources.

Speech Aids for Children on Home Instruction. Suggestions for parents of homebound children by speech teachers to help them give practical speech instruction and practice at home. Both pamphlets were published by the Board of Education of the City of New York, 110 Livingston Street, Brooklyn 1.

* * *

Flying Cargo, an aviation education booklet.

The story of a new, big business, air cargo service. Numerous pictures and a glossary. Good for transportation units, fourth grade and up. National Aviation Education Council, 1025 Connecticut Avenue, N.W., Washington 6, D. C. 50 cents.

* * *

Books of the Year for Children and Bible Stories and Books About Religion for Children. Child Study Association of America, 132 East 74th Street, New York 21. 25 cents each.

* * *

About 100 Books—A Gateway to Better Understanding by Ann G. Wolfe. Division of Youth Services, American Jewish Committee, 386 Fourth Avenue, New York 16. An annotated list of children's and young people's books which portray the life and problems of several ethnic, religious and racial groups. 20 cents.

* * *

Adult Books That Have Been Recommended for Young People. Harcourt, Brace and Company, 383 Madison Avenue, New York 17. Write to Joanna Foster. Free. The books were selected by 12 standard book selection sources.

* * *

Little, Brown Company, 34 Beacon Street, Boston 6, will send prints of Phyllis Rowland's original drawings for *George* to those who would like them for display purposes. And Whittlesey House, 330 West 42nd Street, New York, will send free, in quantities, *Happy Lion* bookmarks from the Fatio-Duvoisin book of that title.

Junior Literary Guild

These are the Junior Literary Guild selections for March:

For boys and girls 5 and 6 years old:

Peek-A-Boo by Ethel and Leonard Kessler. Doubleday, \$2.

For boys and girls 7 and 8 years old:

After the Sun Goes Down by Glenn O. Blough. Whittlesey House, \$2.25.

For boys and girls 9, 10 and 11 years old:

The Story of Caves by Dorothy Sterling. Doubleday, \$2.75.

For girls 12 to 16 years old:

Sweet Sixteen by Anne Emery. Macrae Smith, \$2.75.

For boys 12 to 16 years old:

River Duel by Adrien Stoutenburg. Westminster, \$2.75.

Catalogs available

Dolch Materials. Reading games, basic sight cards, phrase cards, sounding materials, and vocabulary series are included. Free from Garrard Press, Champaign, Illinois.

Hale Books (Cadmus, Allabout, Landmark, Magic Window, and Hale Workbooks). About 500 books for children of all ages. Free. E. M. Hale Company also has available for 50 cents the *Cadmus Curriculum Chart* for correlating Cadmus Books with subject areas. Write to E. M. Hale Company, Eau Claire, Wisconsin.

* * *

The new *Dictionary of American Usage*, based on Fowler's *Modern English Usage*, by Margaret Nicholson (Oxford University Press, \$5.00) is of interest to teachers of English at all levels. It contains much common sense about American English usage standards and is a valuable reference that should be in all school libraries. It should not, however, be revered as a Bible. For example, many people will quarrel with outright condemnations of such expressions as, "It's me," (according to this volume it will die; it is a "study indefensible"), "That long nose of his," "He only died a week ago," "I should not be surprised if it didn't rain," and "The reason is . . . because." Some conspicuous omissions were noted. There is, apparently, no discussion of such questions as the use of a whole clause or sentence as the antecedent of a pronoun, or certain uses of the "double negative."

J. J. D. B.



May Hill Arbuthnot

BOOKS FOR CHILDREN

Edited by MAY HILL ARBUTHNOT

Mrs. Arbuthnot is well-known as a writer and lecturer in the field of children's literature. She is the author of CHILDREN AND BOOKS (Scott, Foresman, 1947) and three anthologies, combined in the single volume, THE ARBUTHNOT ANTHOLOGY (Scott, Foresman, 1953).

MARGARET MARY CLARK reviews books of science, social studies, and biography. Miss Clark is head of the Lewis Carroll Room, Cleveland Public Library, and a member of the committee for ADVENTURING WITH BOOKS (National Council of Teachers of English, 1956).

This spring Mrs. Arbuthnot is taking a well-earned vacation. During this period MISS HARRIET G. LONG, Professor of Library Science at Western Reserve University, has kindly consented to write the reviews of the general children's books. Mrs. Arbuthnot will return to our pages in the fall.

Patty Reed's Doll—Rachel Kelley Laugaard. Illustrated by Elizabeth S. Michaels. The Caxton Printers. 1956. \$3.50. (8-12).

In *Patty Reed's Doll* Rachel Kelley Laugaard has produced a smoothly written book of historical fiction; and Patty's wooden doll, the fictional narrator, deserves to be placed alongside Totty in Rumer Godden's *The Doll's House*, as a finely conceived character in her own right.

The historical episode on which the story is based is the journey of the Reed family along with the ill-fated Donner party from Springfield, Illinois to George R. Stewart's California in 1846. ORDEAL BY HUNGER is perhaps Mrs.

Laugaard's chief source. But in this tale for 8 to 12 year olds the author has realized that truth is more important than facts. The grandmothers who lived to tell some of this experience did not talk down to the grandchildren as they recounted their hardships, though the hardships may have lost some terror over the passing of the years. Mrs. Laugaard has caught the spirit of those pioneer grandmothers, their "western fever," their feeling for and memory of the right detail. The delicate prairie flowers Mrs. Donner taught the children to recognize and call by the name, the here, the dangerous mountain passes;—the thirst, hunger, cold, heat, snow, rain, —and the rainbow.



Harriet G. Long



Margaret Mary Clark

A checking into her bibliography will show that the author has followed the trail faithfully in source material. The reader will strongly suspect that she has also picked the blue larkspur and wild geranium of the prairie where Patty may have passed, and that she has felt the grim heat of the day and the bitter cold at night which Patty felt.

There is sufficient history here for family reading circles, and just the right handling of the tragedies and horrors of that grim expedition for the younger listeners. All readers will be reminded of some aspects of our heritage. The fictional narrator, Patty Reed's doll, still survives in a glass case at Sutter's Fort Historical Museum in Sacramento, California.

The book fell into the hands of the right illustrator, for Mrs. Elizabeth Michaels has caught the realism of pioneer trails and has touched them with the mood of the story.

Mary B. Deaton

Babar's Fair. Written and illustrated by Laurent de Brunhoff. Translated from the French by Merle Haas. Random, 1956. \$3.50. (4-8).

As A. A. Milne once said, "If you love elephants, you will love Babar and Celeste. If you never loved elephants you will love them now." In this the latest of the Babar books it is the three children of King Babar and Queen Celeste who go to the animal fair to celebrate the anniversary of the founding of Celesteville. The monkeys, giraffes, lions, rhinoceroses, and indeed all the other animals have their own buildings, typical of the country each animal inhabits.

Such a day the three small elephants have, visiting the different buildings, stuffing themselves with delicious food, putting on diving suits and flippers to explore the bottom of the lake, and watching a puppet show put on by the kangaroos, who lie on their backs and manipulate the puppets with tail and feet.

Although the story is not as good as in earlier Brunhoff books, the pictures will delight

the children. They are simple in style, but with the kind of detail children like, and with many a chuckle on each page. L



The House of Sixty Fathers. By Meindert DeJong. Pictures by Maurice Sendak. Harper, 1956. \$2.50. (10-12).

All of the books reviewed in this issue are about children of other lands, and the most distinguished of all is *The House of Sixty Fathers*, by the author who won the Newbery Medal in 1954 for *The Wheel on the School*. It has always been true that the most successful stories in this field are those not written expressly for the purpose of instilling knowledge and appreciation. They are those which picture so captivatingly children of other countries that young readers cannot help but be drawn to them. Unconsciously a love for and understanding of that country is instilled with great force and power because it has become the home of a friend.

DeJong has succeeded admirably in meeting this requirement, for he has created a memorable character in Tien Pao who lives with his parents, baby sister, three ducklings and a pig on a sampan in China during the Japanese occupation. When the rainy season comes and swells the river to a torrent, the sampan breaks lose from its moorings while the parents and baby sister are away, and carries Tien Pao and the ducklings and the pig down the river toward the ocean and into Japanese territory.

From this point on we have the saga of a

child's tremendous courage, his love for his parents and his devotion to his pet pig which, as he said, was all the family he had on his long and hazardous journey back to his home. On the way back he comes upon a wounded American flyer, and later lives in the barracks with the Americans, where he now has sixty fathers. But his faith that he will find his own parents never wavers, and the story builds up to a moving climax through the kindliness of an American soldier.

DeJong is not afraid to give the young reader deeply felt emotion. He makes poignant a situation that has been repeated over and over again. For this is war, and war is cruel whenever fought and by whom. In this book the enemy happens to be the Japanese, and some may believe it wrong to speak, as this book does, of the suffering they brought to the Chinese people, and to our airmen and soldiers. But the reading of this story should also help to develop so strong a feeling against war, whoever the contestants may be, as to be an influence against all wars.

Tien Pao is a character children will remember—a happy, fun-loving boy to whom laughter is good. His family devotion is heart-warming and the reader is uplifted by Tien Pao's steadfastness in his loyalties, and his endurance and faith in seemingly hopeless situations.

L

The Monkey Tree. By Irene Mott Bose. Ill. by Enver Ahmed. Dodd, Mead, 1956. \$3.00. (10-12).

This author knows the village life in India as well as any other writer for children. Her knowledge has not been gained after a brief sojourn there, but through living in India for many years, where her Indian husband is a member of the Supreme Court, and where she herself has achieved an outstanding reputation in social service to the people of her adopted country.

Children will enjoy reading about the escapades of four lively boys who enjoy more



The Monkey Tree

than anything else teasing the colony of monkeys in the banyan tree on the edge of the village. However, after the monkeys save one of the boys from a tiger, and in turn they rescue a baby monkey stolen by the gypsies, boys and monkeys become friends.

Timeliness is given to the story by introducing the conflict between Hindus and Muslims when agitators from the city attempt to incite the villagers against the two Muslim families in their midst. Since one of the four boon companions, Majid, is a Muslim, the others hide him and his family until the agitators leave, hurried on their way with the help of the monkeys who let loose a swarm of rock bees to pursue them.

A lively story full of the sights and sounds of everyday life among the common people of a country now undergoing many changes.

L

I Give You My Colt. By Alice Geer Kelsey. Ill. by Helen Torrey. Longmans, Green, 1956. \$2.75. (10-12).

In the present clamor for horse stories, what boy can resist such an effective title, or refrain from reading a book with a beginning sentence such as this: "With horse-knowing hands, Jafar stroked the sleek gray neck of his father's Arabian stallion." Incidentally the young reader will learn something of Iran and the Kashgar tribe, whose men and boys are sometimes called "the cowboys of Iran." Any city boy will relish the free out-of-door life led by these people.

The theme is the oft-repeated one of a boy's



I Give You My Colt

desire to own a horse of his own. When the Subkhan's mare lamed itself and was attacked by jackals Jafar discovered the mare, and hidden behind a rock its newly born colt. Before the mare died she looked into Jafar's eyes and seemed to say, "I give you my colt." So Jafar and his younger brother hide the colt in a cave, but Jafar is made unhappy by the secret and has an unhappy conscience over keeping a colt that does not belong to him. His wise father tells him that having schemed himself into the mess, he must find his own way out, and this he does to a happy and satisfying conclusion.

Interspersed in the story are Persian folk tales, as well as an occasional story from the Shah-nameh, the great Persian epic, as they are told by the tribesmen around the campfires. The author heard these tales during her travels in Iran, and Mrs. Kelsey's great interest in folk tales has already been evidenced in two fine collections: *Once the Hodja*, and *Once the Mullab*. L

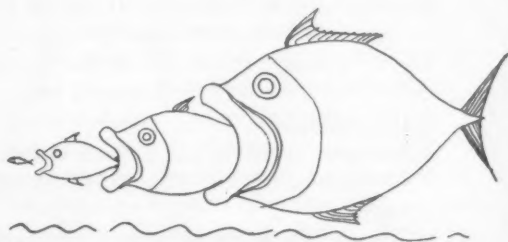
Jonah the Fisherman. Written and illustrated by Reiner Zimnik. Translated by Richard and Clara Winston. Pantheon, 1956. \$3.00. (7-10).

This picture-story book is not about a child in another land, for it tells of a Parisian fisherman, but it is none-the-less childlike in appeal, with pen and ink drawings which are unusual and highly entertaining. This is a first book by a German author-artist, and it shows talent original and promising.

Growing tired with sitting on the bank of the Seine with all the other fishermen, and catching nothing but small fish, Jonah, one warm spring night when the chestnut trees were in blossom, had a bright idea. For "every night God sends three bright Ideas to people in Paris," and the third one came to Jonah. It was a new method for catching big fish by leaving the smaller fish on the hook as bait, for, as Jonah suddenly realized, "Big fish live by eating little fish." And so it happened until he caught one almost as big as a hog.

But as often happens, his more conservative companions would not tolerate having their habits disturbed, and their loud clamor finally brought the President of Paris himself. Jonah was put into prison, and then tried, but when the judges saw that he was a good man they gave him some money to leave the city immediately. Thus a life of adventure began. He showed fishermen all over Europe, and in the United States, how to catch big fish. After a time he could not sleep at night because he was homesick, so back to the Seine he came to catch only little fish, but where he was heartily welcomed by his comrades.

The author-artist states that there are two things he loves best to draw, smoke and horses. His ability to draw the latter may be shown in a later book. In this one there are drawings of smoke a-plenty, from the billowing clouds which pour from the funnels of the fishing boats, to that made by the pipe-smoking fisherman lined up along the banks of the Seine. L



Jonah the Fisherman

Little Pear and the Rabbits. By Eleanor Frances Lattimore. Morrow, 1956. \$2.50. (4-7).

Here is the same mischievous Little Pear greatly beloved by small children in two earlier books by this author, *Little Pear*, and *Little Pear and his Friends*. By now this Chinese boy, with the short pigtail sticking up on his shaven head, is old enough to be threatened with going to school in a larger village three miles away. But how to get there on his short legs was a problem until his pet rabbits had a family, and he was able to sell their progeny to his playmates and earn enough money to buy a small donkey. Then off to school he went happily enough. He has other adventures, too, such as falling into an abandoned well, and following the tracks of what he thought must be the largest bear in all China.



Little Pear and the Rabbits

Children will gain some knowledge of village and family life in another land, and will realize, also, that Little Pear is very much like themselves in his curiosity and craving for adventure. Good for reading aloud to pre-schoolers, and one the six and seven year olds will soon read by themselves. L

Social Studies

Communism in Our World. By John C. Caldwell. John Day Co., 1956. \$2.75. (11 and up).

From a rich background of state department service in the Far East, John C. Caldwell has

written this significant interpretation of communism and its dangers for younger readers, and contrasts it with the free enterprise system of their own country. He defines communism, tells how people live in a communist country, the way in which countries become satellites, communistic efforts toward world control, and the efforts of the United States to combat communism. This book is both stirring and thought provoking and should stimulate young readers to a fresh awareness of what communism really means, and the importance of knowing their own historical and political background.

C

Caves of Mystery. By John Scott Douglas. Illustrated with photographs. Dodd, Mead, 1956. \$3.00. (12-adult).

The First Book of Caves. By Elizabeth Hamilton. Illustrated by Bette J. Davis. Watts, 1956. \$1.95. (8-12).

Cave exploration has a special fascination for many ages, and these two books will provide satisfying reading for the younger as well as the more advanced reader. *Caves of Mystery* gives fascinating details of the scientific background



The First Book of Caves

of caves, the discovery of many of the world's greatest caves, the hazards encountered, and the contributions made to scientific knowledge by experienced or sometimes novice, cave explorers. Photographs reveal some of the natural beauties in cave formations, and primitive art forms left in caves by prehistoric man.

The First Book of Caves, attractively illustrated in three colors, is a simpler introduction to the subject, and covers some of the more spectacular cave discoveries, tells how caves are

formed, and describes some of the plant and animal life common to caves.

Both titles emphasize the dangers of cave exploration, and the precautions to be taken by amateurs. Both are well indexed. C



The Great Discovery

The Great Discovery: The Story of the Dead Sea Scrolls. By Azriel Eisenberg. Illustrated by Shane Miller. Abelard Schuman, 1956. \$2.50. (10-15).

One of the greatest archeological discoveries of our time reads as excitingly as any adventure tale, as the young Arab boy, Mohammed, fruitlessly seeking the trail of his lost goat near the shores of the Dead Sea, uncovered the cave-hidden Old Testament scrolls. The faith of a few men in their contents saved the scrolls for the Biblical scholars of the world even though lives were endangered to achieve it. The book is illustrated with line drawings, and there are a few photographs showing scrolls and two of the jars in which they were found. C

The Andrews Raid or The Great Locomotive Chase. By Samuel and Beryl Epstein. Illustrated by R. M. Powers. Coward McCann, 1956. \$2.95. (10-adult).

Rarely does a story have the reader "pulling for both teams" as does this true narrative of the Civil War; the story of the efforts of a Yankee spy and his brave crew to steal a Southern train and destroy key transportation in the South, while the equally courageous conductor of the stolen train and his aids followed in breathless pursuit. Almost within sight of their goal, Andrews and his men had to give up,

too closely pursued to accomplish their work of destruction, and Conductor William Fuller, the leader of the Southern rescuing team had saved both the railroad and the locomotive. The story ends dramatically at the failure of the raid, but a brief epilogue tells of later events. This historic tale is a fine supplement to the study of the Civil War, as well as for popular reading. C

My Village in Austria. By Sonia and Tim Gidal. Illustrated with photographs. Pantheon, 1956. \$3.50. (9-12).

My Village in India. By Sonia and Tim Gidal. Illustrated with photographs. Pantheon, 1956. \$3.50. (9-12).

In each of these informational stories, a boy of the family gives a vivid and detailed picture of what life is like in his own particular village. There are the daily events in his own home, how food is prepared, the distribution of work, clothing, village activities and occasional festivals. The books are lively and entertaining and not without touches of humor, and the photographs are exceptionally fine. The books will enrich the study of a country as children are introduced to the every day life of one particular environment. C

The Search for the Little Yellow Men. By MacDonald Hastings. Illustrated with photographs. Alfred Knopf, 1956. \$3.00. (11-15).

An explorer and writer, London-born MacDonald Hastings has penned an exciting account of his experiences while on an assignment to study the pygmies of South Africa, who are as primitive as Stone Age people, and who live by hunting, use bones and sinew for tools, animal hides to clothe themselves, and enjoy no settled homes. Inadequately equipped for their rugged journey, the author's very small party encountered almost every conceivable physical difficulty from heat, insects, sand and rain storms but they did accomplish their purpose. Twenty-two photographs offer interesting pictures of the African country and the pygmy people. C

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